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The Lost Reformation

Why Lutheranism Failed in England during the Reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis examines the reasons why England became Reformed rather than Lutheran at the Reformation.

When King Henry divorced his Catholic Queen, Catherine of Aragon, and defied the Roman See, Lutheranism seemed the natural religion for his realm. Henry authorised and supported dialogue with the Germans, hoping for a religious and political settlement, and the Lutheran message was winning English converts. Yet despite all this, both Henry and his son Edward rejected Lutheranism, though for widely different reasons.

The thesis focuses on the religious beliefs and motives of Henry and his chief minister Thomas Cromwell, and studies the religious legislation of Henry's reign. It seeks to explain why, after an apparently promising start, Henry's Lutheran policy first stalled then suddenly collapsed. It also compares the English experience with that in Germany and Scandinavia, where Lutheranism succeeded. Finally it considers why the religious settlement of Edward VI, though owing much to Luther, was nonetheless decisively Reformed.

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Acknowledgements

I owe much to many I do not know personally, and in some cases have never even seen, whose writings and research have encouraged my own interest in the Reformation. In particular I should mention Professors A. G. Dickens, Diarmaid MacCulloch, and Eamon Duffy for the '*English Reformation*', '*Thomas Cranmer: A Life*', and '*The Stripping of the Altars*' respectively.

I thank Newcastle University for admitting me as a post-graduate student to undertake this research. Thanks to my supervisor, Professor Euan Cameron, now in New York, for his indispensable advice, criticisms and help. His insight and immense knowledge impressed at every one of our progress meetings.

Thanks to Margit for her friendship and interest – most of it from a distance, unfortunately, conveyed by email and telephone, due to circumstances beyond the control of either of us.

Terminology

Like most people who write about the Reformation, I have spent a disproportionate amount of time wondering how best to describe the main characters.

I have tried to use 'Lutheran' and 'Reformed' in a confessionally correct way. 'Protestant' or 'Reformer' is a general umbrella term when confessional exactness is not required. Some might prefer 'evangelical' for this purpose, but words change their meaning over time, and 'evangelical', in the sense that it is widely used today, is hardly a faithful description of Luther, Melanchthon, and Cranmer. For this reason, I have generally avoided this one.

'Catholic' is used in a general sense, sometimes including the rebel King Henry VIII. Nothing derogatory is implied by 'Papist' or 'Papalist'.

List of Abbreviations

AC	Augsburg Confession
ANF	*The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. A. Roberts & J. Donaldson, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, 1951)
Apology	Philip Melanchthon's '*Apology of the Augsburg Confession*'
Assertion	King Henry VIII: *Assertion of the Seven Sacraments Against Martin Luther*, (Heversham Tracts Vol. 5, Eng. trans. by T.W.Gent, London, 1687.)
Assertion (Latin)	*Assertio septem sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum ab Henrico VIII, Angliae rege Leoni X. Pont. Max* (Neapoli: apud Nicolaum Naso, 1728)
BSLK	*Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche, herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930* (7 Auflage, reprint Göttingen, 1976)
Brecht	Martin Brecht's 3 Vol. Biography of Luther: Vol. 1: *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation, 1485-1521* (Philadelphia, 1985) Vol. 2: *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521-1532* (Minneapolis, 1990) Vol. 3: *Martin Luther: The Preservation of the Church, 1532-1545* (Minneapolis, 1993)

Burnet	G. Burnet's *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, 6 vols. ed. N. Pocock (Oxford, 1865)
Confutation	The Roman Catholic Reply to the Augsburg Confession (from the *Corpus Reformatorum*)
Cox	*Works of Archbishop Cranmer*, ed. J.E. Cox, 2 vols. (Cambridge, PS, 1844)
CR	*Corpus Reformatorum*
CSP, Span.	*Calendar of State papers, Spanish*, ed. P. de Gayangos, G. Mattingly, M.A.S.Hume and R. Tyler, 15 vols. in 20 (H.M.S.O, 1862-1954)
CSP, Ven.	*Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, ed. R. Brown, C. Bentinck and H. Brown 9 vols (H.M.S.O., 1864-98)
Defence	Thomas Cranmer's '*Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament*', taken from *The Work of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. G. E. Duffield, CLRC (Appleford, 1964)
HJ	*Historical Journal*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
Foxe	*Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. Josiah Pratt, 8 vols (4th edn. London, 1877)
LCC	*Library of Christian Classics*, ed. J. Baillie et al., 26 vols (London, 1969)
LP	*Letters & Papers, Foreign & Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509-47*, ed. J.S.Brewer et al., 21 vols. and 2 vols. addenda, (H.M.S.O., 1862-1932)

LW	*Luther's Works*, ed. J. Pelikan and H. Lehmann, 55 vols. (St. Louis & Philadelphia, 1955-86)
MBW	*Melanchthons Briefwechsel: Kritische und Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe*, ed. H. Scheible et al., 13 vols. (to date) (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1977-2000)
Misc. Writings	*Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. J.E. Cox (Cambridge, PS, 1846)
OL	*Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, ed. H. Robinson, 2 Vols. (PS, 1846)
NPNF	*A Select Library of the Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. P. Schaff & H. Wade, 14 vols. (2nd series, Grand Rapids, 1952-57)
PG	Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris, 1844-90)
PL	Migne's *Patrologia Latina* (Paris, 1844-90)
PS	Parker Society
SP	*State Papers published under the authority of His Majesty's Commission, King Henry VIII*, 11 vols (1830-52)
Tappert	*The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. T. Tappert (Philadelphia, 1959)
UP	University Press
WA	*Dr. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 58 vols. (Weimar, 1883-1948)
WA, Br	*Dr. Martin Luthers Werke: Briefwechsel. 18 vols.*

WA, DB	*Dr. Martin Luthers Werke: Deutsche Bibel, 12 vols.*
WA, TR	*Dr. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden. 6 vols.*

<u>*Notes*</u>

King Henry 's *Assertion of the Seven Sacraments* is available in English and Latin. In the thesis I have usually quoted from the English. Occasionally, when an exact quote is required for comparison or analysis, the Latin is used.

<u>Confessional Documents</u>

The main European confessional documents cited throughout the thesis are Luther's Catechisms, the Augsburg Confession, The Roman Catholic *Confutation*, and Melanchthon's *Apology of the Augsburg Confession.*

One of the easiest ways to access these documents in English is via the Internet (www.ctsfw.edu/etext/boc). Direct quotes are usually taken from there. The translation is F. Bente's, from the *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1921). Unfortunately this tri-lingual edition seems virtually unobtainable in England. Also the Internet does not give page numbers.

The most common English version is Tappert's *'Book of Concord'*. The originals are in *Corpus Reformatorum* Vols. 27-28, but *'Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelische-Lutherischen Kirche'* seems more conveniently laid out (Latin/German side by side) and easier to refer to. Both Tappert and *Die Bekenntnisschriften* contain the Lutheran documents; however, neither has the *Confutation.*

Therefore, source references for the Lutheran documents are the Internet (where relevant), Tappert and *Bekenntnisschriften.* Section numbers

are from the Latin text. For the Roman *Confutation*, the source is the *Corpus Reformatorum*.

Martin Luther's Works

The originals are contained in the Weimar edition, in Latin or German. Much has been translated into English (the Concordia volumes) but not all. As a general rule, therefore, source referencing is as follows. When the original is in Latin, the Weimar is used with an *LW* reference if available. When the original is in German, because many find late medieval German in gothic type difficult to read, the *LW* is preferred if it is available, except for key quotes.

Introduction

The Lutheran Question

This thesis examines why, in spite of the Lutheran influence on the English Reformation and the Anglo-German policy of King Henry VIII, England eventually became Reformed rather than Lutheran under Edward VI.

There are two main reasons for selecting this subject. The first is that, given King Henry's rebellion against the authority of the pope, Lutheranism was the natural religious and political choice for king and country. The second is that it has received little detailed scholarly scrutiny so far.

A Lutheran settlement in the 1530s would have enabled Henry to claim a moral seal of approval for rejecting the pope and becoming overseer of the church as well as the state, all the while allowing him to acquire church land and wealth in the process. It would have strengthened the authority of the king and reduced that of the church, especially in civil affairs. The example of Kings Christian III in Denmark and Gustav in Sweden was there for him to follow. If any further incentive was needed, then even the Lutheran doctrine seemed to be mellowing a little, just at the moment when Henry had the opportunity to accept it. The Augsburg Confession, composed by Philip Melanchthon in 1530, was consciously conciliatory in tone, and in 1536 Martin Luther personally endorsed a document which stated that good works were 'necessary for salvation'.[1]

As for the country as a whole, the Lutheran option had advantages over the one that the English under Edward later accepted. Some Edwardian

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[1] Discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

reforms aroused resentment, especially the forced removal of much-loved images from parish churches, and the denial of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. A Lutheran Reformation would have spared both of these, leaving ample room for the beauty of holiness in religious life. Luther stoutly defended the real presence against Protestant radicals, and he acted decisively to suppress iconoclasm when it broke out in Germany. Medieval altar pieces and artwork still adorn German and Scandinavian Lutheran churches, and they might still be adorning many of ours as well if the Edwardians had accepted a Lutheran settlement (always assuming that they could have survived the seventeenth century Puritan onslaught).

Moreover, the Lutheran gospel might have found receptive hearts in England, according to evidence from a rather unexpected source.

> 'Put all thy trust in Christ's Passion and death, and think only thereon, and none other thing .....have the cross before thee, and say thus: Lord, Father of heaven, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, I set between thee and my evil deeds, and the desert (suffering) of Jesus Christ I offer for that which I should have deserved, and have not'.[2]

Such salutary counsel for the soul might sound like an extract from Martin Luther's Postils or pastoral writings. In fact it is taken from one of the texts issued by the medieval church for priests visiting the dying. Though saints, relics, processions, images, purgatory and more flourished in the church of the late middle ages, the moment of death seemed to concentrate the mind of

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[2] E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven & London, 1992), p.315.

laity and clergy alike. The priest attending his flock during their last days on earth, sought to bring comfort and assurance by stressing God's love and 'the desire to save, and the all-sufficiency of the merits of the crucified Christ for the sinner, from whom nothing but repentance and faith was required'.[3]

Of course the words have to be taken in their context of the priest ministering the sacramental salvation of the church to those in his care. It was scarcely Prof. Eamon Duffy's intention to suggest that, in some mysterious way, the liturgy and services of late medieval England were longing for and anticipating the Reformation. But whatever the context, the *ars moriendi* ensured that Lutheran-sounding language was already familiar to English ears, so that when the Reformation did arrive, Luther's seed would not be falling on entirely stony ground.

Maybe this is to assume that English religion needed a change of some sort. Many would argue that it did not. But change there was, whether the English wanted it or not, and it came from within rather than without. The catalyst for the religious upheaval in sixteenth century England was not Luther nailing ninety-five theses to the door of a church in Wittenberg, or blasting away at the papacy, but an English King's love for Anne Boleyn and his yearning for a male heir. Luther's defiance of the pope may have made King Henry bolder than he would otherwise have been, but it was not Luther who urged Henry to revolt against Rome in the way he did. In one of the ironies of the Reformation, the Lutherans were among the strongest supporters of Queen Catherine of Aragon. When Henry cruelly celebrated her death in January 1536 with a mass followed by banqueting, jousting and dancing,

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[3] Ibid, p.314.

Luther mourned the woman who 'lost her cause' in the world, except with us 'poor beggars' at Wittenberg, who would gladly have maintained her 'in royal honour, where she should have stayed'.[4] So the decisive point for the English was a domestic affair, and they could not blame foreign interference for the religious controversies of Henry's reign.

So for King Henry VIII in the middle 1530s, independent from Rome and in control of the church and clergy, Lutheranism was not just an attractive option, but also the sensible, natural and even partly ready-made option, religiously, politically and socially. It suited the ambitions of the king, its message was not wholly alien, and its more moderate nature, compared with the Reformed gospel of the Swiss, should have made it fairly amenable to the English people. If there is such a thing as a national religious destiny, this was it. England could, and maybe should, have gone Lutheran. Therefore there is every incentive to examine why it did not.

But investigating why something did *not* happen is comparatively rare in research, and consequently this subject has received scant attention from historians, despite its interest value and the massive amount of literature on the English Reformation. Each leading historian tends to have his own unique approach and area of interest, and the Lutheran question does not often blend in easily with either of these.

Professor G. R. Elton wrote of a Tudor age of religious and political reform, largely imposed by the government, against a background of factional rivalry at court, with each party jockeying for power and the king's favour.[5]

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[4] *LP* 10.141, p.51; 10.133; *LW* 50, p.137.
[5] G. R. Elton, 'Thomas Cromwell's Decline and Fall', *Cambridge Historical Journal* 10 (1951), pp.150-185; *Policy and Police: The Enforcement of Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge, 1972); *Reform & Renewal: Thomas Cromwell and the Common Weal*

Professor A. G. Dickens emphasised the religious character of the Reformation. Though not entirely uncritical of its leaders or their doctrines, he saw it broadly as a force for good, supplanting an inadequate medieval religion. The Reformation was an 'integral part of the European movement', and the English looked discerningly to the continent for support, though not necessarily leadership. The main influences came first from Luther, and Professor Dickens felt that subsequent shifts towards Calvinism, notably on the Eucharist, 'should not be conceived as fundamental changes of direction'.[6] So if no great gulf existed between the Protestant alternatives, it was hardly critical from the Dickens viewpoint to investigate why one was taken in preference to the other.

The same holds true of the 'revisionist' writers. 'English men and women did not want the Reformation, and most of them were slow to accept it when it came', according to Professor Scarisbrick. Dr. Christopher Haigh agreed: England had 'blundering Reformations, which most did not understand, which few wanted'. And medieval Catholicism was neither decadent nor unpopular, its most eloquent advocate, Eamon Duffy, contended; for it 'exerted an enormously strong, diverse and vigorous hold over the imagination and loyalty of the people', and the Reformation came as a 'violent disruption' to a vibrant, traditional religion.[7] So whether the Reformation was an ill wind blowing little or no good, or a destructive storm sweeping away a medieval golden age, the possibility that a different

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(Cambridge, 1973); *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government* (Cambridge 1974); *England Under The Tudors* (London, 1974); *Reform and Reformation* (London, 1977).

[6] A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (2nd edn., London, 1989), p.13.

[7] J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford, 1984), p.1; C. Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), p.14; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p.4.

Protestant heresy might have been marginally more tolerable is unlikely to arouse much interest, or bring much comfort.

This does not mean that Luther is an altogether unknown quantity in England. In 1965 Professor Neelak Tjernagel, in what soon became a standard work, described the inroads Lutheranism made during Henry's reign, the theological discussions between the English and the Germans that Henry authorised in the 1530s, and the doctrinal articles drawn up as a result. Perhaps surprisingly for a Lutheran scholar, he took a sympathetic attitude towards Henry and the English church, blaming neither for Lutheranism's failure.[8] Two other works on the same era followed in the early 1990s: Carl Trueman's study of how five English Reformers were influenced by Luther (and others), and also Rory McEntegart's detailed analysis of the religious cum political toing and froing between England and Germany. McEntegart argued convincingly that Henry's overtures to the Lutherans were motivated not merely by their transient diplomatic usefulness to England, but by the king's interest in theology and his desire for serious dialogue, and even for a religious and political settlement. Rather more judgmental than Tjernagel, McEntegart takes the Lutherans to task for being too inflexible on dogma, and holds them mainly responsible for the breakdown of Anglo-Lutheran relations.[9] Thus Henry is implicitly absolved, and at this point misgivings arise, for it is difficult to think of any other significant issue in Henry's reign where he

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[8] N. Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans* (St. Louis, 1965).
[9] C. Trueman, *Luther's Legacy: Salvation and the English Reformers, 1525-56* (Oxford, 1994); R. McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden 1531-1547: Faction, Foreign Policy and the English Reformation' (London School of Economics Ph.D., 1992); see especially pp.319-52. Lutheranism's demise has also been treated in shorter pieces, for example an article or a part of a larger work. Eg: B. Hall, 'The Early Rise and Gradual Decline of Lutheranism in England', in D. Baker (ed.), *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c. 1500-c. 1750* (*Studies in Church History*, Subsidia 2, 1979), pp.103-32; A. Ryrie, 'The Strange Death of Lutheran England', *JEH* 53 no. 1 (January 2002), pp.64-92.

was the blameless or wronged party. The Lutherans were indeed men of religious conviction, but that did not bring failure in Denmark and Sweden, so why should it do so in England? Charity is a virtue, but it can be misapplied.

So even with these works to hand, the question 'why not Lutheran' can still be explored further. Tjernagel and Trueman were more interested in explaining the Lutheran influence on the English Reformation and the Anglican Church than analysing the reasons for its eventual demise. McEntegart has outlined the case against the Lutherans, and now it is the turn of the defence to speak, and also to examine the theological issues more closely against the diplomatic background. Further, both Tjernagel and McEntegart stopped at Henry's death, but the passing of Henry and the accession of Edward offered Lutheranism a new opportunity. The failure of Lutheranism in two successive Tudor reigns, when it seemed the obvious way forward, has seldom been at the forefront of a historian's mind, though many have touched on it, or on subjects related to it.

The Theologian-King

Arising out of the Lutheran question is another one, concerning King Henry VIII specifically.

The title 'Defender of the Faith', received from the pope in 1521, was intended to be more ceremonial than doctrinal. After the breach with Rome, however, Henry took it more seriously, even to the point of arbitrating on matters of faith and doctrine. So the success or failure of Lutheranism in England depended significantly on Henry's theology, and also on his ability to assess and understand theological arguments.

So, what was that theology exactly, and how competent was he in the subject?

Here is another subject on which historians are often reluctant to give a firm opinion, put off perhaps by the unusualness of some of the religious legislation of his reign. This is hardly surprising. The Ten Articles of 1536 are an illustration of 'our English talent for concocting ambiguous and flexible documents', according to A. G. Dickens. They contained 'something to please both evangelicals and traditionalists, and something to annoy them both', observed D. MacCulloch. They 'reflected the struggles between radical and traditionalist within the Convocation', commented Eamon Duffy diplomatically. The articles were a compromise, but still the 'first official acceptance of Protestantism in England in any form', ventured Tjernagel cautiously. More boldly, J. Scarisbrick called them 'a blatantly heterodox document' that followed the Lutheran theology of Augsburg Confession 'almost verbatim for most of the way'. Richard Rex disagreed, however: whilst allowing for the fact that they were intended to settle specific disputes rather than be a comprehensive statement of faith, he described them as 'largely Catholic', except for the reservations over purgatory and the cult of the saints. Dr. Rex felt that the article on justification was 'impeccably loyal' to Augustine, and 'contained nothing that could not also be found in the writings of John Fisher'. Unlike J. Scarisbrick, Dr. Rex saw a 'distinctly un-Lutheran emphasis on the necessity of good works in salvation': in fact, justification by 'contrition and faith joined with charity constitutes an explicit repudiation of Lutheran *solafidianism*'.[10]

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[10] Dickens, *The English Reformation,* p.200; MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p.164; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p.392; Tjernagel: *Henry VIII & the Lutherans*, p.166; J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*

But if Henry's Ten Articles are debatable, his Act of Six Articles in 1539 is a theological quagmire. Prof. Scarisbrick thought it was mainly 'a panic measure, a sudden display of orthodoxy to disarm enemies at home and abroad'. However, he also noted that Henry still wanted good relations with the Reformers, though chiefly for secular reasons, and might even have been considering further religious reforms after 1539. Others are more forthright. This act was 'convoluted and confusing' (Rory McEntegart) with 'thoroughly peculiar doctrinal priorities' (Alec Ryrie). According to Christopher Haigh it effectively meant the end of Reform, but McEntegart has shown that Henry was still interested in further talks with the Lutherans on religion as well as politics after the Act was passed.[11]

Yet another view of Henry is that his religious policy was a 'search for a mean, a middle way, between the Papists and the Sacramentarians, between Rome and Zurich, a middle way on which all could unite'.[12] However, Henry never invited representatives of the Romanists or the Swiss to England for theological discussions. Besides, making clerical celibacy a 'divine law' in the Six Articles – a far more severe statement than any pope had ever made – hardly sounds like a 'middle way'.

This thesis will examine the main points of the Ten Articles and the Six Articles in depth down to the fine detail, in order to learn more about Henry's personal beliefs, his theological ability, and the reasons for his 'Lutheran'

(London, 1968), pp.337, 399; R. Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1993), pp.146-47.

[11] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.365, 420-21(For Scarisbrick's general survey of Henry's part traditional, part reformist religious policy and legislation, see pp.384-423); McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', pp.350, 401; A. Ryrie, 'English Evangelical Reformers in the Last Years of Henry VIII' (Oxford D.Phil., 2000), p.42; Haigh, *English Reformations*, pp.152-53.

[12] G.W.Bernard, 'The Making of Religious Policy, 1533-46: Henry VIII and the Search for the Middle Way', *HJ* 41 no. 2 (1998), pp.321-49.

policy in the 1530s. It will also try to answer related though unresolved questions: for example, if he remained a Catholic at heart, why did he pursue his Lutheran policy at all? And if he was neither Catholic nor Protestant, then what was he? Indeed, what *could* he have been?

Almost as important as Henry's faith is that of his powerful chief minister, Thomas Cromwell. According to Merriman, Cromwell had 'no real devotion to Protestantism'; his religion was 'dictated by political expediency', and even his role in the English Bible was due to political rather than religious motives. Tjernagel felt that Cromwell 'had no real religious ties', and was 'prepared to subordinate religious to civil interests'. He saw him as a 'shadowy and often sinister figure', an 'English Richelieu' mainly concerned with creating 'financial and military despotism', who 'lacked the conscience of Thomas More and the religious sincerity of Thomas Cranmer'.[13] More recent writers believe that Cromwell was broadly though discreetly Lutheran.[14]

I will argue that Henry and Cromwell each had deeper religious convictions than some historians are wont to allow; and also that they had *different* convictions, which is one reason for the sometimes confusing religious policy of the 1530s.

Outline of the Thesis

Because the aim of the thesis is to answer outstanding questions, not merely narrate events, it is arranged in topical rather than chronological order.

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[13] R. B. Merriman, *The Life & Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1902), vol. 1, pp.130-31, 265-6, 286, 301); Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans*, pp.80, 96-97.
[14] Dickens, *The English Reformation*, p.134; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, p.303; McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', pp.294-95.

Chapter 1 will begin with the opening exchanges between England and Germany, namely King Henry's *Assertion of the Seven Sacraments* and Luther's reply. It will also look at how Henry's attitude to Luther softened to the point at which he was first prepared, and later eager, for serious religious dialogue. The progress that the Reformation made in England will be reviewed quickly – quickly because it has been covered before by Tjernagel and others, and also because the main purpose of this thesis is to discover what went wrong after the prospects began to look rather promising in the middle 1530s.

The Anglo-Lutheran negotiations went well on a number of topics, but stalled in 1538 on communion in one kind, private masses and clerical celibacy. Chapter two will study these issues, and the Act of Six Articles of 1539, that historical riddle still waiting to be solved. Glyn Redworth has set the act against the European diplomatic background, but I believe the key to unravelling it lies in theology – and particularly in King Henry's eccentric theological mind – rather than diplomacy.[15] So chapter two will try to come to grips with this perplexing act and discover the 'thinking' behind it. I will argue that it was not quite as religiously indecipherable as is often supposed. This is not to claim that the act was good or bad, or right or wrong; only that it could not have been as puzzling to those who framed it as it seems to us. It must have made sense to somebody. Even the actions of an idiot have some meaning (at least to the idiot), so this act surely has a raison d'être of its own, if only we can find out what it is.

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[15] G. Redworth, 'A Study in Formulation of Policy: The Genesis and Evolution of the Six Articles', *JEH* 37 (1986), pp.42-67.

While researching in Strasbourg, I believe that Rory McEntegart unearthed a vital clue - and a clue that he did not follow up - to understanding Henry's Lutheran policy more clearly. Henry thought that he and the Lutherans were doctrinally closer than they really were, even on the issue of justification.[16] As this was the chief controversy at the Reformation, it deserves a whole chapter (the third) to itself. Chapter three will include an examination of the statements on penance and justification from the Ten Articles.

Chapter four will discuss the fall of Thomas Cromwell and the collapse of Henry's Lutheran policy in 1540. Here, as with the Six Articles, historians differ in their analysis. One view is that Cromwell was overthrown by a plot masterminded by his most redoubtable Catholic opponents, Stephen Gardiner the bishop of Winchester, and the duke of Norfolk, who successfully manipulated Henry and turned him against his first minister. So Professors Elton and Scarisbrick have argued. But Jasper Ridley, though not denying the factional fighting and intrigue at the king's court, put the responsibility directly on Henry. The Lisle Letters, edited by Muriel St. Clare Byrne, have revealed more details about the power struggle at court, particularly between Cromwell and Norfolk. Glyn Redworth has played defence counsel for Gardiner, even suggesting that 'we must consider Gardiner's complete exclusion from the machinations, both royal and conciliar, which enveloped the fall of Cromwell'. Redworth added that Gardiner and Norfolk were too divided over foreign policy to present a united front (though this would not necessarily prevent an alliance at home in the cause of the old faith). David Head, Norfolk's

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[16] McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', p.401.

biographer, believes that Cromwell's death was Henry's idea, with the duke and the bishop acting as the 'agents but not the instigators' of it. Susan Brigden has suggested that Cromwell's allies - Robert Barnes and his fellows - had ruffled some powerful and wealthy feathers by preaching against the covetousness of the rich.[17] The ground has been well trodden, but I believe that McEntegart's clue (above) enables us to look at these dramatic events again in a new light.

Chapter five will consider how Lutheranism fared elsewhere in Europe, particularly in the Scandinavian countries where, as in England, the sovereign was the driving force behind the reform of the church. King Christian's Danish settlement of 1537 provided Henry with a religious blueprint, had he wanted one. But despite the similarities, the English outcome was quite different, and this chapter will suggest reasons why Lutheranism succeeded elsewhere but not here.

I have largely passed over the last years of Henry's reign (1540-47). Little happened then that is directly relevant to the Lutheran question, and in any case Alec Ryrie recently devoted his own doctoral thesis to showing how Reformers, many of them Lutheran or near enough, coped and survived during this uncertain period.[18]

When Edward ascended the throne, the Reformers had the opportunity that Henry had denied them, namely to make England Lutheran. Chapter six

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[17] Elton, 'Thomas Cromwell's Decline and Fall', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 10 (1951), pp.150-185; *Reform and Reformation*, pp.289-94; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.375-83; J. Ridley, *Henry VIII* (London, 1984), p.339; M. St. Clare Byrne (ed.), *Lisle Letters*, 6 vols. (Chicago, 1981) 6, pp.211-251; G. Redworth, *In Defence of the Church Catholic: Life of Stephen Gardiner* (Oxford, 1990), pp.105-129 (quotes from pp.106, 127); D. Head, *Ebbs & Flows of Fortune: The Life of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (Georgia, 1995), pp.152-178 (quote from p.175); S. Brigden, 'Popular Disturbance and the fall of Thomas Cromwell and the Reformers, 1539-40', *HJ* 24, 2 (1981), pp.257-78;.*London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), pp.308-324, especially p.320.

will show Lutheranism suddenly encountering unexpected opposition just when it seemed that, at long last, its hour had arrived. This is the shortest chapter in the thesis, mainly because one of the principal characters in the Edwardian Reformation, Thomas Cranmer, has been the focus of much fine work in recent years, especially from Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch, Dr. P. N. Brooks and Dr. Ashley Null. Prof. MacCulloch also describes how the Protestant Reformation, largely under Cranmer's leadership, unfolded after Edward's accession.[19] A conclusion will then summarise the findings of the thesis.

[18] Ryrie, 'English Evangelicals in the Last Years of Henry VIII'.
[19] D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven & London, 1996); *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London, 1999); P. N. Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist* (London, 1965); A. Null, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of Repentance* (Oxford, 2000). For Cranmer on the Eucharist, the main controversy among Reformers, see MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp.180-84, 232-4; 354-55; 379-83; 390-92; 614-16; Brooks, pp.3-37. See also B. Hall, 'Cranmer, the Eucharist and the Foreign Divines in the Reign of Edward VI', in P. Ayris and D. Selwyn (eds), *Thomas Cranmer, Churchman and Scholar* (Woodbridge, 1993), pp.217-51.

Chapter 1: War and Peace

Part 1: The Defender of the Faith

Asserting the Seven Sacraments

Relations between England and the Lutherans got off to a spectacularly unpromising start. On Sunday the 12th of May 1521, the Lord Chancellor Wolsey led a solemn procession through the streets of London to preside over a ceremony at St. Paul's, where Martin Luther was formally anathematised, and as many of his books as Wolsey's men could find were ceremonially burned. John Fisher, England's most able theologian, delivered a sermon defending papal primacy, attacking justification by faith alone, and denying Luther's claim to an 'exclusive interpretation of Scripture' regardless of the fathers, the councils, the church and everyone else.[1]

Worse soon followed, with a bilious public spat between the heretic Luther and King Henry VIII. What sparked it off was Luther's 'Babylonian Captivity of the Church', published in October 1520, and seen by many as his boldest attack yet on medieval orthodoxy. Luther claimed that four of the Seven Sacraments of the medieval church – marriage, confirmation, ordination and extreme unction – were not sacraments at all, while a fifth – penance – was really a return to the baptismal state of grace. This left only Baptism and the Eucharist truly worthy of the name 'sacrament', but on the second of these, Luther attacked much traditional teaching. Administering 'communion in one kind' (bread only, without the wine) to the laity was

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[1] *LP* 3 (1) 1273-74. Fisher was one of Luther's ablest early opponents on justification – see R. Rex, *Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.116-28.

impious and tyrannical. Then though Luther did not deny Christ's presence in the Eucharist, he held that the bread and wine were united with the body and blood of Christ, thereby rejecting the dogma of transubstantiation (that the substance of bread and wine disappear, and only their outward forms remain). He also savaged the medieval moral doctrine that the mass was a sacrifice offered to God by the priest; rather it was a promise of forgiveness of sins for every Christian. Closely related to this was Luther's teaching that all believers were priests, seen as an attack on the sacerdotal system of the medieval church. The authority of the papacy was set aside as well; Scripture is above the church, said Luther, so the church, popes and councils have no right to make articles of faith without an express Scriptural warrant.[2]

In England Henry VIII had been coveting a title something akin to the 'Most Christian King' of France or the 'Most Catholic King' of Spain. 'Defender of the Faith' was considered by the pope as early as 1516, but it was not yet granted, and Henry was still a mere 'your grace'. Luther's latest assault gave Henry the opportunity to ride to the defence of the church Catholic against the enemy, and by the summer of 1522 Henry had completed his *Assertion of the Seven Sacraments*.

To abuse a heretic was almost a moral medieval duty, and Henry duly began fuming against Luther, this enemy of the church, instigated by the devil, moved by anger and hatred, full of vipers' poison. Henry could not conceive of a serpent more venomous. This 'hellish wolf' rages against Scripture, the fathers, the councils, the popes and the church. Then after a short defence of indulgences and the papacy, the first Sacrament defended was the Eucharist,

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[2] *WA* 6, pp.497-573; *LW* 36, pp.3-126. These doctrinal issues are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

beginning with a barrage of finger pointing accusations. Why should Luther condemn the clergy for denying the cup to the laity? How does Luther know that this was forced upon the people against their wish? And why was Luther so aroused by the laity communing in one kind only, yet silent about children who no longer commune at all, contrary to the well-attested practice in the early church?[3] Then on transubstantiation Henry suspected that Luther, 'when it pleases him', will deny any presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament. Luther did no such thing of course, but perhaps Henry feared a revival of the English Lollard heresy. The *Assertion* rejected Luther's idea of a union of the bread and Christ's body, for 'there is no substance worthy to be mixed with that Substance which created all substances'. Luther's comparison with the Incarnation – the union of the divine and human nature in Christ – was also dismissed: none are 'so wicked or ignorant as to think that the humanity (of Jesus) was changed into the Deity', stormed Henry, only showing, unfortunately, that he had not rightly understood Luther. The *Assertion* was adamant that after consecration the substance of bread and wine disappear and remain in their outward form only. St. Paul called it 'bread', but only for the benefit of inexperienced hearers and readers. The word 'transubstantiation' may only be three hundred years old, but the doctrine went back to the early church, insisted Henry, enlisting St. Paul and various church fathers in support.[4] At this point the reader is a little surprised not to hear the name of Innocent III as well. Henry's doctrinal authority for transubstantiation was the teaching of the apostles and the fathers (as Henry

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[3] *Assertion*, pp.14-17.
[4] *Assertion*, pp.17-30, especially pp.17, 25-29. Scripture text: 1 Corinthians 11.26.

interpreted it), not the Lateran Council.[5] The same was true for the sacrifice of the mass, which Luther was trying to 'destroy' by turning it into a promise.[6]

Luther's views on baptism were less heretical, so Henry directed his fire to a related subject instead. He set about caricaturing Luther's teaching that believers are justified before God by faith alone, not good works. In a furious tirade Luther was charged with establishing the 'grace of baptism for a free liberty of sinning', preaching faith to 'defend an evil life', and making faith a 'cloak for a wicked life'.[7] A fear and loathing of 'faith alone' bereft of good works re-appeared in the section on Penance. Luther's claim that the church had silenced the preaching of forgiveness was angrily rejected. Who has not heard that those who repent shall be forgiven? demanded Henry, recalling the adulteress and Luke's penitent thief, pardoned even though 'he could not cancel his crimes committed by any satisfaction'. But the problem nowadays, continued Henry, was that the people are 'so easily inclined to rely on this confidence', and need to be reminded of the justice of God. 'For there are ten to be found who sin in too much confidence of that promise, rather than one who despairs of obtaining pardon'.[8] This suggests that in some parts of England the medieval system of penance and satisfactions was not especially rigorous.[9]

On Confession, the *Assertion* denied that the 'word of Christ concerning the keys are given to the laity'. Sins should be confessed to

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[5] Ibid, pp.31-51. For Lateran IV, see *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo et al. (3rd edn., Bologna, 1973), p.230, lines 36-37.
[6] *Assertion*, pp.30-32, 38, 45-49, 105. The subject of the mass as a sacrifice will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 2, pp.70-87.
[7] *Assertion*, pp.58, 58-59.
[8] Ibid, p.63, John 8.1-12; Luke 23.39-43.
[9] Some reformers also feared that a routine confession of sins followed by absolution could encourage spiritual complacency; see E. Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford, 1991), p.307.

priests. The laity include women, and Henry was flabbergasted that Luther's doctrine would permit a layman to confess his sins to a woman, and that she could absolve him. This was the 'height of madness'. His reasons were not entirely theological, however, for women have that 'bad esteem of not being able to conceal anything of a secret'. Maybe this, scoffed Henry, was why Luther won't insist on naming all sins at confession. Then Luther's rejection of works was attacked once more in the section on satisfactions. Though 'none was ever yet so foolish as to say that works without faith can satisfy', Luther was wrong to argue that 'works are superfluous and faith alone is sufficient'.[10]

No promise of Christ and no Scriptural command existed for Confirmation, Luther had said. The *Assertion* did not dispute this, but if Luther would believe only what Scripture commands, why did he believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary? The 'faith of the church' was the authority for calling Confirmation a sacrament, and the church would not put such confidence in an 'empty sign'.[11]

Marriage was rightly numbered among the sacraments because the church believes it to be a sacrament – the same church that confirms what books should be included in the canon, and who wrote the Gospels. Marriage is a type of Christ and the church, St. Paul said, and in a mixed marriage the unbelieving partner is sanctified by the believing one, so surely something more holy than the 'care of propagating the flesh' should be understood here. Henry now warmed to his subject. 'What God has joined let not man rend asunder', Christ commanded. 'O the admirable word, which none could have spoken but the Word that was made flesh', enthused the king. Those married

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[10] *Assertion*, pp.69-72, 76-77.
[11] Ibid, pp.79-83.

are joined by God, not just ceremonies of men. Would God join them 'for the sake of carnal copulation only?' In that case it would be 'sufficient to leave man to his own natural and corrupt inclinations'. And was not Christ's first miracle performed at a wedding feast in Cana, demonstrating that, in matrimony, the 'insipid water of carnal concupiscence, by the secret grace of God, is changed to wine of the best taste'. Outside marriage 'what would the conjugal act be but concupiscence?'[12] Few would guess from these delectable royal words that only two years ago Elizabeth Blount, Henry's mistress, had borne him a son.[13]

The section on Orders contains some of the most heated language in the entire book. In denying that ordination was a sacrament, the *Assertion* detected a sinister stratagem of Luther's to 'render ministers of the church contemptible, to procure that the sacraments of the church may also be despised and undervalued, as being ministered by the hands of the vile and unworthy ministers'. This doctrine would 'tend directly to the destruction of faith in Christ'. Luther's universal priesthood was condemned, for Luther 'extols the laity to the priesthood ..... that he might reduce priests to the rank of laity'. Luther's rejection of clerical celibacy also rankled greatly. The sacrament of orders was unknown in Christ's church, and nothing but an invention of the 'church of the pope', so Luther had said. But the pope is the Vicar of Christ, the *Assertion* countered, and Christ's church is the pope's. Priests alone have power to consecrate the elements in the Eucharist. The laying on of hands was defended. Appalled at the idea of lay people choosing

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[12] Ibid, pp.83-98; Ephesians 5.23-32; 1 Corinthians 7.14; 1 Timothy 2.15; Hebrews 13.4.
[13] J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London, 1968), p.147.

their own pastor, the *Assertion* quoted the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and the instructions they contained concerning the ordination of bishops.[14]

Finally on Unction, Henry admitted that many before Luther had doubted whether the epistle of James rightly belonged in the canon. However, it was eventually confirmed by a 'full consent of the whole church'. Then Henry could not resist a final swipe at *sola fides*. If Luther can dispense with Unction because faith alone was enough to heal and save, why then cannot Luther cure the dying? 'We look for news daily from Germany of his raising the dead', jeered the king. Then the *Assertion* closed as it began, full of sound and fury against this wicked Luther.[15]

In October 1521 he submitted his work to Pope Leo, who was impressed. Soon after, Henry received the title '*Defensor Fidei*'.[16]

Henry the Theologian

As a theological work, Henry's *Assertion* has been damned with faint praise by historians. 'Not a piece of theology of the highest order', was J. Scarisbrick's verdict.[17] 'Not as bad as its Protestant detractors made it out to be', said Tjernagel, not doubting its 'essential sincerity'.[18] He meant to be fair to Henry, but the Defender of the Faith's ears would hardly have glowed on hearing this.

Henry allowed the *Assertion* to be published under his name and claimed the work as his own.[19] Before examining the question of authorship

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[14] *Assertion*, pp.99-116.
[15] Ibid, pp.119, 124, 126-133.
[16] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, p.116.

more closely, however, an analysis of the theological content of the work should reveal what sort of theologian its author was.

It contains nearly 70 quotes from fathers: one third from Augustine, one third from Jerome, Ambrose and Gregory, and the final third from various others.[20] Obviously Henry had a high regard for the fathers. Looking to them for the right doctrine, while at the same time accepting the authority of the church as divinely guided down the ages, and of course defending the pope as Christ's Vicar from Luther's attack, would all make Henry fairly conventional for his time.[21]

But how deep was this 'patristic' faith, and did Henry or his helpers search the original writings, or rely on other men's quotes? If the latter, then a possible source might be Hugo de Sancto Victore (d.1142), one of the few post-patristic writers quoted in the *Assertion* (and with evident approval) in the sections on transubstantiation and baptism.

In the section on transubstantiation the *Assertion* has two quotes from Hugo, both word for word.[22] However, Henry also buttressed his case by including references to Ambrose, Eusebius of Emesa, Gregory of Nyssa,

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[17] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, p.111.
[18] Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans*, pp.10-11.
[19] *CSP, Span.* 5 (1).9, p.30; 4 (1) 224, pp.349-50. This of course does not rule out the involvement of researchers – see the next section.
[20] Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans*, p.12.
[21] Cameron, *The European Reformation*, pp.89-90; H.Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology, Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp.373-74.
[22] Nam cum unum sit sacramentum, tria ibi discreta proponuntur: species videlicet visibilis, et veritas corporis, et virtus gratiae spiritualis..... Quod enim videmus, species est panis et vini; quod autem sub specie illa credimus, verum corpus Christi est ..... *Assertion* (Latin), p.20; Hugo: *PL* 176, col.466C, Cap.7. 'Though this sacrament is but one, yet three different things (are proposed in it): the visible form, the real presence of the body and the virtue of spiritual grace'..... For what we see is the species of bread and wine, but what we believe to be under the form is the very body of Christ.....' *Assertion*, pp.25-26.
Per verba sanctificationis vera panis et vera vini substantia, in verum corpus et sanguinem Christi convertitur, sola specie panis et vini remanente, substantia in et substantiam transeunte. *Assertion* (Latin), p.20; Hugo: *PL* 176, col.468A, Cap.9. 'By the word of sanctification the true substance of bread and wine is turned or changed into the true body

Theophilus and Cyril, each one designed to show that the fathers taught the doctrine of transubstantiation if not the word.[23] None of these are in Hugo's section on the conversion of the elements in the Eucharist.

On Baptism the *Assertion* has another exact quote from Hugo, but also quotes from Augustine and Bede on baptismal regeneration that Hugo has not used.[24] Later in the same chapter there is a lengthy quote from Augustine on the authority of civil powers to restrain evil, and a claim that Ambrose commanded married persons to 'abstain from lawful pleasures' during Lent, and therefore the pope has the right to institute a fast or prayers.[25] The connection with baptism may not be immediately obvious, but Henry was quoting examples of civil and spiritual authority as part of his attack on Luther for allegedly making faith a 'cloak for a wicked life', effectively an excuse for sinning. He had misunderstood Luther and was veering off on a tangent; but at least the misunderstanding shows that original sources had been searched,

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and blood of Christ, only the form of bread and wine remaining, and the substance passing into another substance': *Assertion*, p.26.

[23] *Assertion*, pp.11, 26-28. As these authors wrote before the general embodiment of Aristotelian physics in medieval Christian thinking, it may be debated whether Henry was justified in using them to support transubstantiation (though he was hardly the only one to do so). On this subject, Darwell Stone has a relevant section. He argued that Gregory of Nyssa, one of Henry's authorities, did envisage a 'physical change' in the elements, and that though the differences between Gregory and transubstantiation were 'real', they 'pertain rather to different methods of philosophical thought than to essential theological principle'. Henry's quote from Gregory is this: 'Before consecration, tis but bread, but when it is consecrated by mystery, tis made and called the body of Christ' (p.27). Revd. Stone also discusses the views of other fathers quoted by Henry saying essentially the same thing, especially Ambrose, Cyril and Eusebius. See D. Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, Vol. 1 (London, 1909), pp.72-3, 103-6, 129-31; *PG* 45, cols.94-98; *PG* 72, col.911; *PL* 16, col.463.

[24] Sed quia circumcisio eas tantum quae foris sunt enormitates amputare potest, eas vero quae intrinsecus sunt pollutionum sordes mundare non potest, venit post circumcisionem lavacrum aquae totum purgans, ut perfecta justitia signaretur (*Assertion* (Latin), p.44; Hugo: *PL* 176, col.449, Cap. 3B.) 'Because circumcision could only lop off exterior enormities, but not cleanse the inward filth of pollution, a washing font of water succeeded circumcision which purgeth the whole, that perfect justice may be signified'. (*Assertion*, p.56.) Getting slightly confused, Henry was replying to Luther's point that sacraments do not confer grace without faith.

[25] *Assertion*, pp.60-61.

because *these* quotes would not have been found in any index to the fathers' writings on baptism.

Peter Lombard's Sentences, in which quotes from the fathers abound, are an even more likely medieval guide than Hugo's works, and worth analysing more closely. First, in the section on the conversion of the elements into Christ's body, Lombard has just one direct quote from Augustine:

> Si quaeris modum quoid fieri possit, breviter dico. Mysterium fidei salubriter credi potest, investigari salubriter non potest[26]

The *Assertion* did *not* use this, and it is not hard to see why. Henry needed to prove that the elements became the body and blood of Christ by transubstantiation, not by a mystery to be believed though left undefined. Augustine's quote was too weak for Henry, and probably more help to Luther. So the fathers were searched for something more to the king's liking.[27]

On Penance, both Lombard and the *Assertion* have a quote from Bede, as follows. The italics are mine, to highlight the similarity.

Lombard:

> *Coaequalibus quotidiana et levia, gravia vero sacerdoti pandimus.* Sed et gravia coaequalibus pandenda sunt, cum deest sacerdos, et urget periculum. Proinde gravia si occulta, occulte confiteantur; si autem manifesta, publica egent medicina[28]

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[26] Lombard, *Sentences*, Lib. 4, Dist. 11; *PL* 192, col.1096B.
[27] For Henry's patristic quotes, see pp.22-23 and fn. 23.

Assertion:

Coaequalibus quotidiana et levia, graviora vero sacerdotibus pandamus, et quanto vero iusserint tempore purgare curemus; quia sine confessione peccata nequeunt dimitti[29]

Lombard indicates that the original is Bede's work on St. James. Neither chapter nor verse is given, but assuming he means James 5.16 ('confess your sins one to another') the original is as follows:

> Si ergo infirmi in peccatis sint, et haec presbyteris Ecclesiae confessi fuerint, ac perfecto corde ea relinquere atque emendare satagerint, dimittentur eis. Neque enim sine confessione emendationis peccata queunt dimitti. Unde recte subiungitur: *Confitemini ergo alterutrum peccata vestra*, etc In haec autem sententia, illa debet esse discretio, ut quotidiana leviaque peccata alterutrum coaequalibus confiteamur, eorumque quotidiana credamus oratione salvari. Porro gravioris leprae immunditiam juxta legem sacerdoti pandamus, atque ad eius arbitrium qualiter et quanto tempore iusserit purificare curemus.[30]

It seems that Lombard was used a starting point before going back to Bede. Again, it was not a straight copy. On the same subject Lombard has no reference to Chrysostom, but the *Assertion* has three; then Lombard has

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[28] *Sent.* Lib. 4, Dist. 17; *PL* 192, col.1099D.
[29] *Assertion* (Latin), p.57. Let us discover our light and daily crimes to our co-equals, and our serious sins to the priest, and as long as they have dominion in us, let us take care to purge them; for sins cannot be forgiven without confession' (*Assertion*, p.71).
[30] *PL* 93, cols. 39D-40A.

references to Innocent, Cassiodorus and Origen, none of which are in the *Assertion*.[31]

Still on penance Lombard has twelve quotes or references to Augustine, while the *Assertion* has eight, but only one of these eight has been taken from Lombard. Citations appear from a range of Augustine's works, the intention being, apparently, to align him as closely as possible with the later medieval church.[32]

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[31] Lombard, *Sent.* Lib.4: Innocent- Dist. 15; *PL* 192, col.1099A; Cassiodorus - Dist. 18; *PL* 192, col.1100B; Origen - Dist. 19; *PL* 192, col. 1101B. *Assertion* (Chrysostom's quotes), pp.67-68.

[32] Henry's quotes on penance from Augustine, with original references, are these. Unless stated, the *Assertion* (Latin) is exactly as Migne.
(1) Agite poenitentiam qualis agitur in Ecclesia. *Assertion* (Latin), p.55. 'Do penance such as is done in the church' (that is, not secretly.) *Assertion*, p.68. From Augustine, Sermones 392, *Ad Coniugatos*, Cap. 3, *PL* 39, col.1711.
(2) Veniat ad antistites, per quos illi claves ministrentur Ecclesiae. *Assertion* (Latin), pp.56-57. 'Let him (the penitent) come to the priest, who can administer to him the keys of the church'. *Assertion*, p.71. Augustine, Ser. 351, *De utilitatae agendae poenitentiae*, Cap. 6.9; *PL* 39, col.1545.
(3) Quem poenitet omnino poeniteat, et dolorem lacrymis ostendat: repraesentet vitam suam Deo per sacerdotem: praeveniat iudicium Dei per confessionem. *Assertion* (Latin), p.57. 'He that repents, let him truly repent ..... Let him present his life to God by the priest, let him prevent the judgement of God by confession'. *Assertion*, p.71. Augustine, *Liber de vera et falsa poenitentia*, Cap. 10.25; *PL* 40, col.1122.
(4) Frustratur claves Ecclesiae, qui sine sacerdotis arbitrio poenitentiam agit.*Assertion* (Latin), p.57. 'He that doeth penance without the appointment of the priest, frustrates the keys of the church'. *Assertion*, p.71. I cannot trace an exact source for this, but it could be a paraphrase of the following:- Agite poenitentiam qualis agitur in Ecclesia (that is openly, to a priest). ..... Ergo sine causa sunt claves datae Ecclesiae Dei? Frustramus Evangelium, frustramus verbi Christi? Augustine, Ser. 352; *PL* 39, col.1711.
(5) Considerit qualitatem criminis in loco, in tempore, in perseverantia, in varietate personae, et quali hoc fecerit tentatione ..... *Assertion* (Latin), p.58. This is a long quote from Augustine's counsel to penitents, to consider how serious his crime was, the place where it was committed, whether on a holy day, and much more: *Assertion*, p.73. This is the only one of Henry's quotes also found in Lombard, *Sentences*, Lib. 4, Dist. 18; *PL* 192, col.1098B. It is also used in W. Lyndwood, *Provinciale: The Text of the Canons*, ed. J.V.Bullard & H.Chalmer Bell (London, 1929), Book 5, Tit. 16, Chap. 7, p.148. Original is Augustine, *Liber de vera et falsa poenitentia*, Cap.19; *PL* 40, col.1124.
(6) Non sufficit mores in melius commutare, et a praeteritis malis recedere, nisi etiam de his quae facta sunt, satisfaciat Domino, per poenitentiae dolorem, per humilitatis gemitum, per contriti cordis sacrificium, cooperantibus eleemosynis et ieiuniis. *Assertion* (Latin), pp.61-62. As well as changing our ways we should 'also satisfy our Lord for the sins committed by the sorrow of penance ..... with the co-operation of alms deeds and fasts'. *Assertion*, p.77 Very similar to Augustine, Ser. 351, *De utilitatae agendae poenitentiae*, Cap. 5; *PL* 39, col.1549. Migne has 'et a factis malis', 'Deo' for 'Domino' and no 'et ieiunis'. Migne has no variant reading.
(7) Ponat se poenitens omnino in iudicio et potestate sacerdotis. *Assertion* (Latin), p.62. 'Let the penitent deliver himself altogether unto the judgement and power of the priest' *Assertion*,

The above analysis shows that although good use was made of Hugo and most likely Lombard as well, these medieval authorities served mainly as signposts back to original, patristic writings, from which careful selections were made. In his contest with Luther, therefore, Henry deliberately armed himself with the wisdom and teachings of the ancient, most honoured doctors of the church. His *Assertion* was a defence of the medieval faith, but using patristic rather than medieval authorities (with occasional exceptions like Hugo). Naturally this carries with it the risk that quotes from the patristic age may not always be a perfect fit if mechanically transferred to the wholly different religious, cultural and intellectual climate of the early Reformation. That may be a weakness of the *Assertion*. Nevertheless, a clear picture of Henry the theologian is emerging: here was a king with strong views on the Catholic faith, convinced that it rested on the foundation of Scripture and the church fathers.

A Question of Authorship

The *Assertion* was published in the king's name, but whether he was the real author is a debated subject. The work was certainly not an entirely solitary enterprise.

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p.77. Augustine - Ponat se omnino in potestate iudicis, in iudicio sacerdotis, *Liber de vera et falsa poenitentia,* Cap. 15; *PL* 40, col.1125.
(8) Ligant quoque sacerdotes dum satisfactionem poenitentiae confitentibus imponunt: solvunt cum de ea aliquid dimittunt. opus enim iustitiae exercent in peccatores, cum eos iusta poena ligant: opus misericordiae, cum de ea aliquid relaxant. *Assertion* (Latin), p.62. 'The priests do also bind while they enjoin the satisfaction of penance to those who come to confession, they loose when they remit anything thereof: For they exercise the work of justice towards sinners, when they bind them with a just punishment; a work of mercy when they remit somewhat of the same punishment'. *Assertion*, p.77. I cannot trace this in Augustine. The general index to Augustine (*PL* 46, col.589) has only one entry under 'sacisfactio', and that is *PL* 39, col.1548; the same sermon as (6) above, and it does not include this quote. The general index for sacerdos (*PL* 46, col.576) contains no sub-entry for 'satisfactio'.
For Lombard's quotes from Augustine, see *Sent.* Lib. 4, Dist. 14-21; *PL* 192, cols. 1098-1102.

To begin with, there is Thomas More's testimony that he helped to arrange the contents of the book, and that he advised Henry on certain points. Apparently he urged the king not to be too effusive in praising the pope, but it is not altogether clear whether Henry took this advice. J. Scarisbrick and Peter Ackroyd reckon that he did not, but Richard Marius disagrees. Marius argues that the praise for the papacy in the *Assertion* is bland and muted compared with other Catholic tracts against Luther around the same time. This could be because the main aim of the *Assertion* was to defend the seven sacraments rather than the papacy, except in one small section. As the original drafts are lost, it may be impossible to settle this point, but at least it proves that others besides the king were involved in this major broadside against Luther.[33]

Further light has been shed by Richard Rex. Dr. Rex has shown that in the same month that Henry began the work – April, 1521 – theologians from Oxford and Cambridge universities travelled to a conference in London organised by Wolsey for the purpose of refuting Luther. The commission met during May, and included some of the leading theologians in the country, skilled in humanism and the medieval scholastics. Three of the Cambridge delegation – Henry Bullock, Humphrey Walkden and John Watson – had studied Greek under Erasmus in the early 1510s, and were still corresponding with him. Though no record survives of the discussions during this conference, Dr. Rex argues plausibly that its timing alone suggests that it must have had some involvement with the completion of the *Assertion.* The timetable is as follows: Henry began writing in April, Wolsey had a copy of the

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[33] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.112, 270; P. Ackroyd, *The Life of Thomas More* (London, 1998), pp.222, 345; R. Marius, *Thomas More* (London, 1984), pp.276-80. See *Assertion*, pp.4-8 for

still incomplete work by the 12th May, and Pynson had printed it by the middle of June. So it is highly unlikely that Henry, a man known to dislike writing, could have finished the work on his own in just over two months. Even dedicatory verses to Pope Leo X were chosen from a selection brought to the king by Wolsey. Dr. Rex concludes that although Henry began the task unaided, 'it is certain that he was assisted in his work', most likely from 'a group of professional theologians in the right place at the right time'.[34]

A letter from Pace to Wolsey on the 7th of April confirms that Henry had already begun the work then. Pace had seen Henry, and briefly discussed Irish affairs with him. The king, however, was 'otherwise occupied' writing against Luther, as 'I do conjecture'.[35] On the 16th of the same month, Pace wrote to Wolsey again, reporting another meeting with the king. Pace had found Henry reading Luther. Henry was very pleased about the papal bull against Luther, especially 'at such time as he (Henry) had taken upon him the defence of Christ's church with his pen'. Henry was hoping to finish his book 'within these few days'. Further, Henry directed Wolsey to 'provide that within the same space all such as be appointed to examine Luther's books may be congregated together for his highness' perceiving'.[36] Obviously Henry wanted to draw on the expertise of his theologians.

Another piece of evidence comes from a letter of Henry's to Pope Leo X, dated 21st May. Henry assured the pope that he was resolved to 'extirpate' Luther's heresy, which the king deplored. Henry 'thought it best to call the

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the section on papal authority.

[34] R. Rex, 'The English Campaign against Luther in the 1520s', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 39 (1989), pp.85-89. Elsewhere, however, Richard Rex argues that one expert probably *not* involved was John Fisher: Rex, *Theology of John Fisher*, p.230, fn.17.

[35] LP 3 (1) 1220.

learned of his kingdom to consider these errors and denounce them'. He had also urged the emperor and the German princes to act against Luther. Further, Henry sought to 'testify his zeal for the faith by his writings', so that everyone might see that he (Henry) was 'ready to defend the church, not only with his arms, but with the resources of his mind'. Humbly he dedicated to the pope the 'first offerings of his intellect and his little erudition'.[37] So Henry admitted that the gathering of experts was his will, but he was also claiming the *Assertion* as his own work. There may be no real contradiction here; it seems that Henry wanted to act against Luther, but wanted specialists to advise him as well.

There was undoubtedly a role for these experts, quite apart from helping Henry complete the work quickly. For example, in the section on the Words of Institution, there is a discussion on Hebrew and Greek as well as Latin grammar.[38] Then, as the discussion in the previous section has shown, someone had clearly gone through patristic texts quite thoroughly. Henry could have done this himself, but it is perhaps more likely that experts did the research and then produced papers for the king, which More and others could collate.

But there is also evidence to suggest that these papers did not escape royal scrutiny, and that Henry embellished them with his own ideas.

First, the *Assertion* hardly exudes expertise on every page. For instance, it criticised Luther for saying that no one should be *compelled* to commune: Luther's real aim, the *Assertion* accused, was to deny the laity any communion at all. Unfortunately this accusation appeared at a rather

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[36] LP 3 (1) 1233.
[37] LP 3 (1) 1297.

incongruous point – in the section on the Eucharist, just after attacking Luther for supporting communion in *both* kinds for the laity.[39] Now if Luther had a secret, sinister motive to keep the laity away from the altar completely, then defending their right to receive the cup was a strange way of going about it.

Then later on, one argument for calling the mass a good work was that the people would not 'maintain the clergy to say mass if they should be persuaded they could reap no spiritual benefit thereby'.[40] Like the point about communion, it would be surprising if a specialist theologian, especially one who had studied under Erasmus, had argued thus. It sounds more like an enthusiastic amateur getting over heated and a little carried away.

Also, the *Assertion* contains frequent personal references. Numerous examples could be quoted, but perhaps two from each sacrament will make the point sufficiently.

On the Eucharist: Though 'to me' there is no reason why the laity should not receive the cup, nevertheless 'I do not doubt' that the church is right. Then, 'I suppose' that Luther will soon be denying the real presence altogether. On Baptism, and replying to Luther's insistence that the one receiving the sacrament should have faith: 'For my part, I think tis rather to be wished than exacted'. But 'I will do nothing to prejudice faith, from which I derogate nothing', though he does not agree with Luther's faith *alone*. Then the chapter on Penance begins thus: 'I have thought at first to speak' of the necessity of confession. Then, having done so: 'I hope I have' made clear how Luther 'calumnates' the church. Regarding Confirmation: 'For my part, I do not think' that Christ would allow His church to continue so long with a

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[38] *Assertion*, pp.20-22.
[39] *Assertion*, pp.14-17.

vain, empty sign, and 'I therefore admire' why Luther denies this to be a sacrament. On Marriage: 'I disagree with Luther' about marriage in the times of the Law, before Christ. And 'I do not believe' that Christ would have gone to Cana if marriage 'had not already some grace'. On Ordination: 'I will take buckler and shield against the darts of Luther'. And 'I' marvel why anyone can be so 'distracted' as to doubt that grace is conferred in this sacrament. Finally, on Unction: 'I marvelled' why Luther was so hostile to the epistle of James, but 'having read it more attentitively, I wonder not at all' (because James teaches good works, not Luther's faith alone). Consequently, 'I' doubt neither James nor the sacrament of Unction.[41]

This may not be conclusive, but when writing papers on theology for the king, experts might be more likely to give established doctrinal statements and arguments than personal judgements. But even if they did give their own views, it is unlikely that these would appear in the *final* version of the work. It suggests that Henry added some thoughts of his own to the papers he received back from the commission.

However, the picture is incomplete without Wolsey, and Professor Scarisbrick rightly draws attention to him.[42] A letter from Pace to Wolsey on the 17th of November, 1521 proves that Wolsey's contribution went further than just organising and summoning the commission. Pace rejoiced that 'by God's help and your (Wolsey's) wisdom', Henry had now obtained his title, '*Defensor Fidei*'. Pace had just come from a meeting with Henry, in which Henry recalled how he was moved to write against Luther. However (again according to Pace) the king added that he 'never intended so to do afore he

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[40] *Assertion*, p.34.
[41] *Assertion*, pp. 12, 17; 58-59; 67, 77; 80, 83; 85, 96; 102, 106; 125, 126.

was by your grace (Wolsey) moved and led thereunto'. Feeling generous, Henry wanted Wolsey to 'be partner of all the honour and glory that he (Henry) hath obtained'.[43] Pace said nothing about any commission, which suggests that whilst Wolsey was the inspiration behind the *Assertion*, the commission's role was generally a passive one, for the most part doing what they were told.

One of the striking features of the *Assertion* is that it was designed to refute Luther from *patristic* rather than *medieval* authorities. This could have been Wolsey's idea, or Henry's, or even the commission's. Or it may have been a consensus, a normal thing to do, not needing a decision. In the absence of firm evidence, I offer the suggestion that this too was part of Wolsey's plan: Luther had claimed that his new faith was based on Scripture, therefore let the king's highness refute him from Scripture, and the most renowned interpreters of Scripture, namely the ancient doctors and fathers of the church.

It may now be possible to sketch the genesis of the *Assertion*. First, Wolsey proposed to Henry that he should take up his pen against Luther. Perhaps Wolsey felt that a theological work in the king's name, defending the true faith against the notorious German heretic, would enhance Henry's and England's international standing. Not least, Henry might gain his title from the pope. Henry readily agreed. But though the spirit is willing, even the royal flesh may be weak, and Wolsey must have suspected all along that Henry could not complete the work alone. Hunting, hawking and the open fields were more to Henry's liking than researching and writing. So the idea of convening

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[42] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, p.113.
[43] LP 3 (2) 1771, 1772.

a commission was mooted, possibly by Wolsey, then authorised by Henry, perhaps relieved. Individual theologians may have researched and treated different subjects, then sent their papers back to the king. More and others arranged them, sometimes offering their own advice. Henry listened, sometimes disagreeing, but probably he accepted most of what the commission had sent him. However, as a keen amateur theologian, and by now full of enthusiasm for the project, he could not resist adding glosses of his own.

But despite the role of Wolsey, More and the commission, it is still fair to call the *Assertion* Henry's work. If the king was led by Wolsey, he was led willingly; if he took advice, then that advice had to be acceptable to him and convince him. Many an author has been beholden to someone else for ideas and inspiration, and most writers consult specialists as and when necessary. The *Assertion*, therefore, can be safely taken as a reliable statement of Henry's personal beliefs, and his own theological stance.

More will be said about the theologian-king in chapter 2, when his exchanges with the Lutherans and his own bishops in 1538-39 are discussed. Meanwhile, the younger Henry had sprayed invective around rather liberally in his *Assertion*, doubtless believing he could do so with impunity, especially to a heretic. It is perhaps a pity that his advisers did not point out that this was a heretic with a highly inflammable temper, well beyond Henry's reach, with no fear of the English king.

Counterattack

'A soft answer turneth away fury', as the proverb says.[44] But Martin Luther was in no mood for dealing softly with our aspiring Defender of the Faith. He decided to reply to Henry's attack on him by answering fire with fire.

He began by mocking Henry's suggestion that Luther might flee to Bohemia, home of his forerunner Hus. What a wise king this must be if he thinks his miserable book will put Luther to flight! Not that Luther was ashamed of the name Hus – far from it – but God had set him in Wittenberg, so he will carry on tormenting the papistic monster from there. And the problem with these Papists, taunted Luther, was that they were all insufferably dense, so dense in fact that Christ must have smitten them with blindness and madness for their rejection of the gospel. Despite all he has written, they still cannot understand what the reformation conflict is about. They harp on endlessly about the fathers, the councils, human traditions, church customs and the like; but all these are works and thoughts of men prone to err and go astray. Against all of this Luther was proclaiming the Gospel from the infallible Word of God. The latest in a long line of Papist asses and fools that Luther so heartily despised was this king of England, though Henry's delusions of theological prowess made him blather, curse, lie, blaspheme and distort the Scriptures even more than most. Luther was incensed by Henry's accusation that he made faith a 'cloak for a wicked life'. The church Henry defended was Babylon, mother of harlots and abominations, where Satan's seat is; Luther stood for Christ's church, sure in the knowledge that his doctrine was from heaven, which is why he has overcome his foes thus far, and will overcome to

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[44] Proverbs 15.1.

the end. If the enemies want a fight, a fight they will have; God will see who falls first, Luther or the pope.

Whereas Henry's *Assertion* blustered and raged, Luther seethed with contempt. Henry was a stupid king, a scribbler, a pig, an ass, a buffoon, a liar, a blasphemer, wholly unworthy of the title of a king. He was a feeble, unworthy opponent, despite all his bravado a mere sissy, a silly strumpet. The theological pretensions of this 'glorious assertor' and our 'Dominicus Henricus' were mercilessly mocked, for example the rather bland suggestion that the mass must be a good work, else the laity would not render tribute to the clergy. Luther pretended to be overawed and overthrown by such wisdom. 'Now Luther lies prostrate!' he ridiculed. Then he picked himself up, rejoicing that his attack on the mass had provoked his opponents to such fury. Having triumphed over the mass the gospel will triumph over the whole papacy. He defended his doctrine of the Eucharist, but added little new; he had better things to do, like translating the Bible, than waste valuable time on this stupid king. Henry and the Papists were building on the shifting sands of fallible human traditions and customs, but Luther's foundation was the Word of God. Henry and his ilk have failed to prove that mere human institutions count as articles of faith. Luther was waging spiritual warfare with his foes, and had no doubt about the outcome. 'Victor est Lutherus', he proclaimed triumphantly, like a winner already holding the trophy. No one should complain that Luther has handled an earthly king too roughly when Henry has so shamefully blasphemed the divine King, the Lord Jesus Christ.[45]

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[45] Summarised from *WA* 10 (2) pp.175-222. The quote ('Now Luther lies prostrate' – see p.209, line 28) was a reply to Henry's remark that 'neither would the people maintain the clergy to say mass if they should be persuaded they could reap no spiritual benefit thereby' – see p.31 above and *Assertion*, p.34.

Henry was outraged, and wrote to the electors of Germany urging them to restrain Luther and his pernicious doctrines. In a rare conciliatory moment he acknowledged that there was a time when Luther wrote things 'not altogether bad', though he did not elaborate. (He may have meant Luther's criticisms of church abuses rather than doctrines.) Since then, however, Luther has gone off the theological rails and become a threat to all Christendom. Henry claimed that Luther's personal attack concerned him less than his false doctrines. He criticised Luther afresh for thinking that he knew better than the 'old saints and doctors of the church'. Though not opposed in principle to the Bible in the vernacular, Henry counselled the German princes to suppress Luther's translation because it was bound to be full of heresy.[46]

There was disquiet elsewhere in Germany and Europe, and even some of Luther's allies were unhappy that he had treated a king with such derision. Calling the Papist clergy asses and fools was fair game in sixteenth century polemic, but civil powers, unlike the pope's men, were ordained of God and entitled to respect. Luther was unperturbed, however. 'My book against Henry offends many', he wrote in a mood of *Schadenfreude* to Johan Lang in the summer of 1522, 'Just as I wanted'.[47]

Henry was aroused to a near pathological hatred of Luther's teaching on justification and the sacraments, partly because he had misunderstood him. It is a little more difficult to understand why Luther saw red and replied so bitterly. What, we may wonder, had happened to 'love your enemies', 'do good to those who hate you', and 'not rendering evil for evil, or railing for

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[46] *LP* 4 (1) 40.
[47] *WA*, Br 2, p.595, num. 534 (lines 3-4).

railing', and others?[48] But forbearance seldom comes easily, especially as Henry had probably touched on a sore point by accusing Luther of making faith a licence for a life of sin. The implication was that Luther's faith alone required nothing more than mental assent to this or that doctrine, and that it allowed freedom to sin at will because forgiveness was guaranteed regardless of repentance, charity or good works. Henry did not know this, but Luther had spent over ten years in a monastery, earnestly striving to be an exemplary saintly monk. He had memories of freezing nightly vigils, countless masses, long prayers, severe fasting and minutely detailed confessions, one lasting six hours.[49] The charge that he cared nothing for piety and morals, especially coming from a man who had lived a life of luxury, must have made him livid.

Another potentially irritating feature of the *Assertion* is its somewhat lumbering, uninspiring style. It rumbles along like a juggernaut making a lot of noise, but the reader searches in vain for anything really incisive or thought provoking. Luther had gone through an intense spiritual crisis before proclaiming his gospel to the world, and he had defended it in the presence of the Emperor Charles V, and nothing in the *Assertion* was likely to either challenge him or interest him.[50] Henry's rather bland argument that the seven sacraments were called sacraments because the church had done so for a long time probably made him seem theologically very ordinary in Luther's eyes. The Reformer was exasperated with yet another attack on him since the Diet of Worms, which did nothing but go over by now familiar ground once again, while adding nothing new or interesting. The previous year (1521) he

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[48] Matthew 5.44; 1 Peter 3.9.
[49] See Brecht's account of Luther's monastic life, and how he was more zealous for good works than many fellow-monks: Brecht 1, pp.63-70.
[50] Brecht 1, pp.76-82, 175-237, 452-64.

had replied to critiques from the Louvain Professor Latomus, the theological faculty of the University of Paris (Luther called them all 'asses', and their verdict against him 'worthless') and Jerome Emser ('goat Emser').[51] When in 1525 Luther disagreed profoundly with Erasmus on freewill, he nonetheless congratulated him on being the only worthy opponent that he had encountered so far. Whereas all the rest have written 'trifles' about the papacy, indulgences, purgatory and so on, Luther praised Erasmus for going bravely to the heart of the matter, the very jugular of theology.[52] If Henry read this he could hardly have failed to recognise himself among the 'trifling' opponents Luther so despised.

The king's early quarrel with Luther is worth studying for another reason, namely the effect it had on future Anglo-Lutheran relations. It was bad enough for a royal prince, wholly unaccustomed to being answered back or insulted, to be blitzed with abuse from the arch-heretic. But even worse was Luther's judgement, which all Europe now knew, that Henry was a theological dimwit. This taunt must have cut deep. Nothing – not even being called a pig or an ass – was more wounding than to be publicly branded a dunce in the faith, especially for a prince claiming to be its Defender. Henry had written what he felt was a valid defence of the Catholic faith, but Luther replied with scorn and defiance, slight regard and contempt. When the two men later became civil to each other (though never warm) Henry behaved like a man who had something to prove. We shall find some of the arguments in the

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[51] Brecht 2, pp.6-12.
[52] ipsum iugulum petisti, *WA* 18, p.786 (line 30); *LW* 33, p.294, 'You alone ..... have gone for the throat itself'.

Assertion cropping up again in the Anglo-German talks, though this time presented in a more accomplished manner.[53]

But before that, in September 1525 when wounds were still open, the king received an unexpected peace offering from his adversary. Luther wrote to Henry prostrating himself at his feet, humbly beseeching his pardon for the offence that his book had given. On closer inspection, however, this letter was more an offer to apologise than a formal apology itself. Luther had been reliably informed about three things, he said. First, Henry had turned against the Papists and had become favourable to the gospel. Second, the *Assertion* was not Henry's work at all, but disreputable sophists like Wolsey had written it to bring dishonour to the king. Third, that Henry was a gracious and learned prince. Luther was mistaken on the first two counts, while readers of history must make their own judgement on the third. Wholly unaware of his mistake, Luther assured Henry that he preached no gospel but that of Jesus Christ who died for us and rose again, though he admitted having attacked church abuses and the tyranny of the clergy. He offered a full retraction, and promised another book dedicated to Henry if the king would receive the gospel, as Luther hoped and prayed he would.[54]

Luther's source was the exiled king of Denmark, Christian II. Believing that Henry was now inclining to the gospel, Luther wanted to make it easy for him by taking full responsibility for the earlier quarrel. This was a sensitive matter, and Luther took the precaution of sending a draft of his 'apology' to Spalatin for approval by the Saxon court.[55] His letter was well meant, but – alas – sublimely tactless. Luther had not changed his opinion of the *Assertion*;

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[53] Discussed in Chapter 2.
[54] *WA*, Br 3, pp.563-64.

he merely said that such rubbish could never have been written by a king as renowned for his learning as Henry was. Unfortunately, as argued in the previous section, the work *was* Henry's, and he was proud of it and the title it had won for him. Blaming Wolsey only made things even worse if that was possible, because Wolsey was the inspiration behind the work, and still high in the king's favour.

Now it was Henry's turn to answer. He did not want Luther prostrate before him, but before God, for against Him Luther had sinned. Nor was Henry so anxious for honours that he sought a book from a heretic, went on the Defender of the Faith grandly. Luther should repent, confess his sins and do good works to the honour of God. The rest of Henry's letter criticised Luther on various points, notably justification, freewill, the sacraments and the councils, as well as strongly disapproving of his recent marriage to a former nun.[56]

Henry made sure that Luther's 'apology' became public knowledge, and sent his reply via Duke George of Saxony, a fierce opponent of the Reformation, who forwarded it on to Luther at the end of 1526. Luther reflected mockingly on what an honour it was to have such erudite and eminent adversaries. He had humbled himself before Henry in the hope that the reports of him were true, but alas they were not. He would do the same again for the gospel's sake, but the gospel's enemies should not expect patience and gentleness from him any more. Against God's Word, even the high and mighty of this world were but dust and lice.[57]

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[55] Brecht 2, p.347.
[56] *LP* 4 (2) 2446.
[57] Brecht 2, pp.347-48; *WA* 23, pp.17-37.

After this sequence of misunderstandings, bitterness and acrimony few would imagine any Anglo-Lutheran concord in future. But Luther's attempt at reconciliation at least gave King Henry the chance to recover face. It was Luther who had climbed down, and most of Europe knew it. Thus it was easier for Henry to consider the German Lutherans in a new light, even as potential allies, when his attitude towards the papacy later changed. He could approach them without embarrassment, and from a position of some moral strength.

Part 2: Divorce and Honeymoon

The King's Great Matter

The saga of Henry's divorce has been discussed many times and will not be repeated in detail here. All that is needed is a brief survey showing how the pope replaced Luther as Henry's theological *bête noire*.

Prince Arthur, eldest son of King Henry VII, had married Catherine of Aragon in November 1501. Five months later, Arthur died. Anxious to preserve England's alliance with Spain, Henry VII wanted his second son, Prince Henry (later Henry VIII) to marry Catherine. However, a marriage to the wife of a dead brother was problematic. A key point was whether the marriage between Arthur and Catherine had been consummated. If it had, then Henry and Catherine were related by affinity, and a papal dispensation would be required for them to marry. Although Catherine consistently denied consummation, the English and Spanish decided to seek a papal dispensation

anyway, just to be sure. This was duly obtained from Pope Julius II. Henry VIII then married Catherine when he became king in 1509.[58]

The marriage was a fairly happy one, until the 1520s. One problem was that Henry's relations with the Emperor Charles V, Catherine's nephew, had become strained. At first Henry had supported Charles in the war against France, and was hoping that Charles would marry Princess Mary. But war was an expensive business, and Wolsey failed to persuade Parliament to pay the large sums needed. Consequently he had little alternative but to tentatively put forward peace proposals with France at the end of 1524. The timing was extremely unfortunate, because next February Charles won a stunning victory over the French at Pavia with practically no English help, and just when his English allies were seeking a way out. Henry's hopes for an Anglo-Hapsburg alliance by marriage, and a generous slice of French territory as well, were dashed.[59]

More seriously he had fallen in love with Anne Boleyn and out of love with Catherine. Henry was further troubled by the failure to produce a legitimate male heir, a failure that threatened the stability that he and his father had given the country following years of unrest and bloodshed. Their daughter Mary was little compensation for this adversity, Henry felt. Her health was not good, and if she did live she might marry a foreign prince whose commitment to England was compromised by divided loyalties.

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[58] See J. Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988), pp.116-153; V. Murphy, 'Literature and Propaganda of Henry VIII's First Divorce', in *The Reign of Henry VIII, Politics, Policy and Piety*, ed. D. MacCulloch (Basingstoke, 1995), pp.135-158; R. Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1993), pp.6-11; Rex: *Theology of John Fisher*, pp.162-83; J. Ridley, *Henry VIII* (London, 1984), pp.157-69; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.163-239.

[59] R. Wernham, *Before the Armada: The Growth of English Foreign Policy, 1485-1588* (London, 1966), pp.102-106.

Besides, few thought that a woman was firm enough or tough enough to rule in sixteenth century England.

Prospects for an heir were now poor. Catherine had suffered several miscarriages, and two male children had died immediately after birth, while another died only a few weeks old. All this pointed to divine disfavour of the marriage, Henry feared. He had an illegitimate son (Henry Fitzroy) but no royal bastard had ever succeeded his father to the throne.[60]

Two texts from the book of Leviticus preyed on Henry's mind. The first forbids sexual relations or marriage to a brother's wife, and the second warned that anyone who disobeyed this injunction would be childless. For some reason (maybe it just suited his purpose) Henry read 'sonless' for 'childless', and found these verses ominously relevant. But things were complicated by another text from Deuteronomy, which permitted a man to marry his dead brother's wife, if that marriage had produced no children. A son born after the new marriage would succeed in the name of the dead man, not the living brother, in order to preserve his name in Israel. (Polygamy of course was not forbidden among the Jews of the Old Testament.) Henry's theologians then set their minds to resolving this difficulty.[61]

Another disputed point was whether Leviticus was natural law (also called divine law) or not. If so, then the pope did not have the power to grant a dispensation. A minority believed it was, but according to the consensus,

Henry's marriage to Catherine was legal. This problem left Henry with two

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[60] Rex, *Henry VIII*, p.7; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.139-39, 149-52.

[61] Leviticus 18.6, 20.21; Deuteronomy 25.5. Augustine had offered 3 interpretations of Leviticus: (1) a man and wife of a living brother; (2) man and divorced wife of living brother; (3) man and widow of dead brother unless that brother died childless. Most medieval scholars opted for first or third (Rex, *Theology of John Fisher*, p.164). Some argued that the first of

main options open to him. Either he could find some technical reason to invalidate the original papal dispensation, and pursue his case through the ecclesiastical courts; or he could deny the validity of that dispensation by arguing that Leviticus was a divine law, above and outside the pope's authority. Henry preferred the second idea, but he still wanted the pope's consent. There was no talk of rebellion – yet.[62]

Put rather simply perhaps, Henry's attitude can be summed up thus: my case for a divorce is based on Leviticus, therefore the pope should grant it. A more humble approach to the Roman See might have been possible. For example: such is the case with my marriage, in our view according to Scripture, and we submit it to the pope as Christ's Vicar for his consideration, hoping for a favourable answer. It might have been both more sensible as well as more tactful to flatter the pope a little, and trust in his dispensing powers instead of insisting that the earlier dispensation had been issued incorrectly.[63] However, having convinced himself at any rate that the facts were plain enough from Leviticus, Henry acted as though papal approval was something he was entitled to.

Soon Henry would find himself in an agreement (of sorts) with Luther. Both men, though admittedly for widely differing reasons, had faced a personal religious crisis, and the issue was Scripture or the papacy. Both went

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these made Leviticus superfluous, because adultery was condemned elsewhere; therefore the third was preferred (Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.168-69).

[62] Rex, *Henry VIII*, p.8-9; Murphy, 'Literature and Propaganda of Henry's First Divorce', pp.137, 141, 150, 158; Guy, *Tudor England*, p.117. In 1527 Henry decided on divorce (Murphy, p.135; Rex, *Theology of John Fisher*, pp.165). Scarisbrick argued that Henry pursued the canon law avenue as well, just in case it proved fruitful, but his case, as he and his advisers formulated it, was very feeble (*Henry VIII*, pp.181-83). Scarisbrick also argued that Henry actually had a better case that the one he presented – pp.183-97.

[63] For discussion on papal dispensations regarding marriages in the 15th century, see J.A.F. Thomson, *Popes and Princes, 1417-1517: Politics and Polity in the Late Medieval Church* (London, 1980), pp.186-88.

for Scripture. In a sense, this became Henry's 'tower experience'. He and Luther were not allies yet, but he would soon be ready to see his former adversary in a better light.

Henry did not yet foresee or envisage the breach with Rome, but events from now on would lead inexorably to it – unless of course the pope obligingly did everything that Henry wanted him to do. And that would be difficult for the pope, for a number of reasons. He could hardly demean his office to the role of clerical rubber stamp for the convenience of Europe's princes, especially as Henry's case was fragile both in Scripture and canon law. More important, Catherine's nephew was Europe's mightiest prince, the Emperor Charles V, whose troops had bloodily stormed Rome and carried off Pope Clement VII as prisoner in May 1527.[64] Charles disclaimed all responsibility for the looting and carnage, but no words could alter the obvious fact that Clement was in the Emperor's power.

Henry persevered with Rome, but without success. A Papal Commission in England in 1528 failed to bring the required verdict.[65] The king's mood then grew more threatening. In April 1529, Stephen Gardiner, Henry's emissary to Rome, delivered a veiled warning to the pope of the 'solicitations of the princes of Almain'.[66] No details were given, and maybe this was nothing more than a bargaining tactic, but it is astonishing that Henry could even think of playing the Lutheran card so soon after the bitter exchanges of a few years ago. Two months later he bizarrely threatened to appeal over the pope's head to 'the true Vicar of Christ', though leaving the

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[64] Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, pp.145-46.
[65] Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher*, pp.169-74.
[66] *LP* 4 (3) 5476.

identity of this august personage undisclosed.[67] Such fulminating achieved little, however, and when the pope made his peace with Charles V at Barcelona in June that year, Henry's hopes for a satisfactory papal solution receded even further.[68]

Now Henry's personal attitude to the Lutherans was slowly changing. In November 1529 Eustace Chapuys, Charles' ambassador, wrote to the Emperor about a conversation he had with Henry over dinner. The king wished that the pope and his cardinals were less greedy and more concerned for the gospel. They should follow the example of the fathers. (With the benefit of hindsight, I believe this is a clue to the direction in which Henry would soon be leading the English church, after his breach with Rome.) Had Luther confined his attack to the vices and abuses of the church, and not the sacraments and other 'divine institutions', then Henry would have written for him, not against him. Luther's books did contain heresies, admitted Henry, but much truth as well. Significantly Henry told the ambassador that he was determined to reform the English church.[69] From now on relations with the papacy were going downhill fast, and in March 1531 denying that the pope was head of the church no longer counted as heresy in Henry's judgement.[70]

Meanwhile, Henry had been canvassing the opinions of Europe's universities, doctors and theologians on his great matter. The Lutheran view, presented to him in December 1531, went against him. Even if the pope's dispensation and Henry's marriage were wrong, Luther argued, a divorce now

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[67] *LP* 4 (3) 5650. This *may* be an allusion to a far-fetched scheme in 1527 designed to make Wolsey 'caretaker' head of the church while Pope Clement was Charles' prisoner, so that Wolsey would be peacemaker in Europe, and secure Henry's divorce. It came to nothing. See S. J. Gunn, 'Wolsey's Foreign Policy and Domestic Crisis' in S. Gunn & P. Lindley (eds), *Cardinal Wolsey: Church, State and Art* (Cambridge, 1991), p.152.
[68] W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (4th edn., Edinburgh, 1986), p.440.

would be worse; better for Henry to have two wives than divorce his rightful one and stigmatise Princess Mary with illegitimacy. Leviticus applied only to marrying the wife of a living brother, so it did not contradict Deuteronomy. But in any case, Christians should not worry about Moses and the law. The church should listen to Christ's words of Matthew 19 – 'What God has joined, let not man put asunder'. Catherine would still be England's rightful queen even if the divorce went through.[71]

Henry's immediate reaction on hearing this news is not known. This was his second encounter with the Lutherans, and like the first, it must have influenced his policy and future relations with them. In his 'great matter' they had neither convinced him nor offered a satisfactory solution to his dilemma, because whatever the theological arguments, it was simply unthinkable that Catherine and Anne would live in sisterly harmony as joint queens of England. After this it would be highly unlikely that Henry would ever submit wholly and unconditionally to the Lutherans' church confessions. And here I believe is an often-overlooked aspect of Henry's divorce crisis, and one that is very relevant to this thesis. Not only was he now set on a collision course with Rome, he was also receiving advice on *religion* from theologians across Europe, advice that he – as king – could act on or reject. Henry was gradually becoming accustomed to making his own judgements on theological subjects.

Having drawn a blank with Wittenberg, Henry reverted to bullying the pope. He was now openly contemptuous of Rome. It was 'not competent' for the pope to be judge of kings, he lectured to the papal Nuncio. He cared

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[69] *CSP*, *Span.* 4 (1) 224, pp.349-50.
[70] *LP* 5.148, p.69.
[71] Matthew 19.6, 9; *WA*, Br 6, pp.175-88.

nothing for the pope's authority any more, not even excommunication.[72] Thomas More resigned in May 1532, the day after the clergy's submission to the king. Anne Boleyn was pregnant in December that year. Naturally Henry wanted the longed for male heir to be legitimate, and next month he and Anne were secretly married. In the spring the Convocation, presided over by the newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer, sanctioned the marriage to Anne on two grounds. First, Henry's first marriage (assuming Arthur's marriage to Catherine was consummated) was contrary to divine law and outside the pope's dispensing power. Second, Arthur's marriage to Catherine *was* consummated.[73] Henry's marriage to Catherine was annulled on the 23rd of May, and Anne was anointed and crowned queen on Whit Sunday 1533.[74]

Henry kept up his defiance of Rome. As the apostle Peter was a 'fisher who, when he draweth his net too fast and too hard, then he braketh it', so St.Peter's successor should be warned to treat princes carefully, for they 'be great fishes' and will not abide any wrong done to them. So Henry commanded his emissary to remind the pope in February 1533, apparently forgetting that he was not as great a fish as Charles V. Henry wanted no more lectures on the 'pre-eminence of the pope's authority'.[75] During the winter of 1533-34 Chapuys reported that Henry was now prepared to 'throw off allegiance to the Holy See', and that Henry disowned what he had written in the *Assertion* about papal authority, claiming that he had been misled by Wolsey (now out of favour) and other bishops (unnamed). Lutheranism was

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[72] *LP* 5.738, p.352 (22 Feb. 1532).
[73] Rex, *Theology of John Fisher*, p.182.
[74] General summary taken from G.R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation* (London, 1977), p.178; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.309-13; Guy, *Tudor England*, pp.131-33.

'being introduced' in England, and a part of the court was 'much inclined to it'.[76]

In November 1534, the Reformation parliament made King Henry head of the Church in England, and the Act of Supremacy declared him to be ordained of God for the spiritual as well as the material welfare of his subjects. Thus Henry was invested with authority over the national church, now independent of Rome.[77] This Royal Supremacy, however, was *not* something that Henry had borrowed from Germany. It was quite different from Luther's 'Two Kingdoms' idea (God ruling His church through the Word and the Gospel, but ruling the world – the godly and the ungodly – through the secular power).[78] No Lutheran prince in Germany bore a title comparable to 'Defender of the Faith', or used language like 'our spiritual jurisdiction' in the manner of our Dominicus Henricus, when, in April 1533, he authorised Cranmer to determine his divorce.[79] The Act of Supremacy was a Henrician settlement, making the king arbiter and supreme authority in the spiritual as well as the temporal sphere, including matters of faith and doctrine.[80]

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[75] *SP* 7, pp.417-18; *LP* 6.194 (28 Feb. '33).
[76] *LP* 6.1501, p.607; *LP* 7.152; *CSP, Span.* 5 (1).9, p.30.
[77] Elton, *Reform and Reformation*, pp.188-89, 196-97; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.287-88, 405-6.
[78] Luther, *Large Catechism*, 4th Commandment, Tappert, p.385, section 150, *BSLK*, p.598, section 150; *LW* 44, xiii-xiv; *LW* 49, pp.383-87; Sc. text, Romans, 13, 1-4. See also AC, Article 28, Tappert, pp.81-84, *BSLK*, pp.120-23; W. Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther* (Brighton, 1984), pp.36-61, 131-32.
[79] *LP* 6.332. The role of the prince or king in Lutheran states and nations is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
[80] Princely power had been growing in the 15th century, even in the ecclesiastical sphere. See Thomson, *Popes and Princes: Politics and Polity in the Late Medieval Church*, pp.29-53. 'Under the king the concept of a national church could grow in men's minds even before the break up of western Christendom in the 16th century' (p.52). 'By the end of the 15th century, the territorial church was accepted as a political fact, although it was still regarded as existing within the broader organisation of the Church Universal' (p.53). Henry was no doubt influenced by these developments. Still, the Royal Supremacy was nonetheless a dramatic constitutional and religious break with the past.

Henry and his ministers set about consolidating the Royal Supremacy. Early evidence for national independence from Rome was unearthed in an epistle of Eleutherius, Bishop of Rome to King Lucius of Britain in AD169, authorising him to 'rule your kingdom', for 'you are God's vicar' there.[81] After the executions of More and Fisher in the summer of 1535, Henry's bishops put up little resistance to the king's sovereignty in spiritual as well as temporal things. The Bishops' Book of 1537 stated that 'God hath constituted Christian kings and princes to be as the chief heads and overlookers of the said priests and bishops, to cause them to administer their office and power committed unto them purely and sincerely'.[82] All through his reign Henry took his position seriously; in one of his last addresses to parliament in 1545 he referred to himself as God's 'vicar and high minister'.[83] As long as Henry lived, therefore, the doctrine and practice of the English church, and all religious legislation, would have to be acceptable to him, and authorised by him.

In that case, therefore, what should the doctrine of Henry's church be? Renouncing Rome without submitting to the Lutheran yoke did not necessarily leave England religiously rudderless, because Henry already had a rock on which he could build his church. The *Assertion* has shown how highly he valued the church fathers, and the next two chapters will show how he tried, admittedly not entirely successfully, to establish a 'patristic' church in England.

But Henry was no isolationist, and he took an active interest in European developments. At the diet of Augsburg in 1530, Philip Melanchthon,

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[81] Foxe 1, pp.309-10; A. Foxe & J. Guy, *Reassessing the Henrician Age, Humanism, Politics and Reform, 1500-1550* (Oxford, 1986), pp.158-63.; Guy, *Tudor England*, pp.128-29, 133; D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven & London, 1996), pp.54-55. Also the pope's jurisdiction in England had been denied in days of Richard II (Foxe 3, pp.316-17).
[82] Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, p.98.

leader of the Lutheran delegation as Luther himself was still under the imperial ban, had composed the Augsburg Confession and begun his *Apology*, systematically setting out the Lutheran faith and doctrine.[84] Partly because the Augsburg Confession was a conciliatory document, Henry felt that the gap between the Catholics and the Lutherans was no longer as wide as it once was, and that Charles should have been more flexible on the points of difference. In Henry's opinion, he and King Francis of France were better qualified to arbitrate than the Emperor.[85] Consequently he started what can be called his 'Lutheran policy' – a serious attempt to engage in real dialogue with the Germans with a view to a possible religious and political settlement. The first of three main rounds of Anglo-Lutheran talks took place in 1534, when Henry sent ambassadors Nicolas Heath and Christopher Mont to the German princes, assuring them that he wished to make common cause with them, as well as persuading them of justice of his own cause. Chapuys had already noted Henry's interest in the Lutherans, and reported it to Charles V. Nothing of real substance was achieved, and the Lutherans remained unconvinced that Henry was right to put away his queen, but this difference was not enough to bring the contacts to an end.[86] That did not deter Henry, however, and by September 1534 Melanchthon had received two invitations to England,

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[83] Foxe 5, p.535. For more examples and a discussion of how Henry exercised his Royal Supremacy, see Rex, *Henry VIII*, pp.173-74; A. Ryrie, 'English Evangelical Reformers in the Last Years of Henry VIII' (Oxford D.Phil., 2000), pp.69-82.
[84] On Melanchthon at Augsburg, see C. Manschreck, *Melanchthon, The Quiet Reformer* (Westport, Connecticut, 1975) pp.173-219.
[85] R. Friedenthal, *Luther* (London, 1970), p.491.
[86] *LP* 7.21; *LP* 6.89, p.35. For a thorough analysis of the first round of Anglo-Lutheran contacts from 1531-34, see R. McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden, 1531-1547: Faction, Foreign Policy and the English Reformation' (London School of Economics Ph. D., 1992), pp.18-77.

though the decision on whether to go or not lay in the hands of Elector John Frederick.[87]

The next round of Anglo-German talks took place in 1535-36. Edward Fox, Nicolas Heath and Robert Barnes were Henry's emissaries to Germany, and Fox attended a session of the Schmalkaldic League in December 1535. Henry credited the German princes (and himself) with desiring to 'advance the glory of God and the truth of His Word'. He instructed the English delegation to emphasise how much common ground there was, chiefly in the rejection of the papacy.[88] At the end of these negotiations in April 1536, a document known as the 'Wittenberg Articles' was produced. It owed much to the Augsburg Confession and Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*, and it will be examined in more detail in chapter 3.

Then in July 1536, the King and Convocation approved the Ten Articles, the 'first of the Henrician formularies of faith'.[89] Ever since the early 1530s Protestant preaching had been growing in England while the traditional faith was not officially abolished, and one purpose of the Ten was to end divisions and bring in some order.[90] The first five articles dealt with doctrines necessary to salvation, and the rest with commendable church ceremonies, which, though 'not expressly commanded of God, nor necessary to salvation', should nonetheless be kept for the sake of good order. Article one defended the Bible as God's Word, and the Apostles', the Nicene and Athanasian creeds. Article two upheld the Sacrament of Baptism as necessary for

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[87] *LP* 7.1147.
[88] *LP* 9.213; 929. For full details of the Anglo-German negotiations of 1535-36, see McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', pp.78-189.
[89] A.G. Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation* (London, 1959), p.142. For the Ten Articles, see C.H.Williams (ed), *English Historical Documents*, Vol. 5, 1485-1588 (London, 1967), pp.795-805.

salvation, and specifically with Anabaptists in mind, confirmed the baptism of infants. Articles three and four covered the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, and the fifth dealt with justification, declaring it to be attained by 'contrition and faith joined with charity', but only through the Father's grace and mercy, and for Christ's sake. Exactly what this meant will be investigated in chapter three. Article six commended images for devotional piety, but forbade the superstitious abuse of them. Saints should be honoured, according to article seven, for the virtues Christ planted in them and their example to us, but not with the honour due only to God. Article eight stressed that while salvation is ours through Christ alone – the only Mediator – it was nonetheless still 'very laudable to pray to saints in heaven', who also pray and intercede for us that we may be granted grace, forgiveness and help in doing the will of God. Saints were not patrons, nor more merciful and willing to hear us than Christ, but certain holy days and saints days were retained. Under article nine church rites and ceremonies, like candles on Candlemas-day and ashes on Ash Wednesday, were preserved to 'put us in remembrance of those spiritual things that they do signify'; but it was emphasised that none of these ceremonies have the power to remit sin. Finally article ten on purgatory declared that while the exact state and condition of departed souls was 'uncertain by Scripture' and known only to God, it was a charitable thing to pray for them in masses, commending them to His mercy that 'they be relieved and holpen of some part of their pain'. Thus the ancients did. Abuses such as Rome's pardons were expressly forbidden.

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[90] S. Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), pp.256-261.

It is not clear whether the division of the Articles into two sections – the first dealing directly with salvation and the second covering things more commendable than essential – was due more to the influence of Erasmus or Melanchthon. (It was probably both). A detailed discussion of the articles on penance and justification must be deferred to chapter three. Suffice to say now that more than a little Lutheran influence can be detected in the second part as well as the first. Unlike some Protestants, Lutherans were never hostile to images per se, only the abuse of them.[91] Lutherans were happy for saints to be remembered, looked on as examples for their faith and good works, though not invoked as mediators.[92] Godly church ceremonies continued in Lutheran churches, though exactly how to define 'godly' might be disputed.[93] So the only potentially serious problem was the last article on masses for the departed.

The Ten Articles were not intended to be an exhaustive doctrinal statement. Notable omissions deferred for another time included communion in one kind or two, private masses, the mass as a sacrifice, clerical celibacy, vows, and four sacraments – marriage, orders, confirmation and unction. Taken as a whole the articles did not represent any known confessional line. Religion in England was changing from medieval orthodoxy, but it was still unclear in what direction it would go. The vagueness of these articles – and particularly the difficulty in pinning them down confessionally – suggests that they were framed by a diplomat rather than a theologian. However, though they were issued in Henry's name, I will argue (in chapter 3) that the real author of the Ten was not Henry but his chief minister, Thomas Cromwell.

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[91] *LW* 40, pp.86-91; 51, pp.81-85. On images see also Chapter 6, pp.280-86.
[92] AC, Article 21, Tappert, pp.46-48, *BSLK*, pp.83b-83d.

Thomas Cromwell: Lutheran Vice-Gerent

In 1529 Cromwell had made a will requiring a 'continent and good living priest to sing for my soul by the space of seven years'. A year later, in a letter to Cardinal Wolsey, he wished that Luther had never been born.[94] Advancing six years, however, on the 9th of April 1536, we find Martin Luther replying to a letter he had received from Cromwell. Luther thanked him for his kind words, commended his earnest goodwill in the cause of Christ – which he had heard about from Robert Barnes, himself a committed Lutheran – and prayed that the Lord would complete the good work begun in him (Cromwell).[95] By now Wittenberg had a high regard for Cromwell, and Justus Jonas also wrote cordially to him, assuring him that if agreement could be reached in religion, a political treaty was also possible.[96] Later that year, when Barnes had fallen on hard times and needed help, he knew where to turn. He appealed to Cromwell, thanking him for all his support and commending his sermon in Convocation on the 21st of June, 'which hath done more glory to Christ than all the sermons that the bishops hath preached this half year'.[97]

It would be understandable for Barnes to go a little overboard with praise for his patron, but there was no reason for the hard-headed Germans to join in, unless they were persuaded by what they had heard. At some point between 1530 and 1536, therefore, Cromwell had travelled down the Damascus road, though he kept the details of his conversion a close secret.

This is not to deny that he was a humanist and admirer of Erasmus' erudition,

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[93] AC, Article 15, Tappert, pp 36-37, *BSLK*, pp.69-70.
[94] R. Merriman, *The Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1902) 1, p.61, 327.
[95] *LW* 50, pp.136-38. It seems that Cromwell's letter to Luther is lost; it is not in Merriman or *LP*.
[96] *LP* 10.665.

as others have argued.[98] But theologically by the middle thirties Cromwell had moved from Rotterdam on to Wittenberg. Luther was certainly not so stupid as to confuse one of his own kind with an Erasmian.

Born in 1485, the son of a blacksmith, Cromwell's rise to power was extraordinary. In July 1536 Henry made him 'omnicompetent' Vice-Gerent, with 'official precedence over the whole episcopate'.[99] He used his authority vigorously in the cause of the Reformation. As well as supporting Lutheran preachers like Barnes, Cromwell directed Richard Taverner to translate Lutheran works into English, including the Augsburg Confession and the *Apology*.[100] The Ten Articles were reinforced by two sets of Royal Injunctions drawn up by Cromwell, the first in 1536 and the second two years later.[101] He has been especially commended for his efforts on behalf of the Bible in English. Unlike the rest of Western Christendom, the Bible in the vernacular had been opposed by medieval English authorities, largely because of its associations with the Lollard heresy. In the 1520s, however, orthodox men like Thomas More and Henry himself were cautiously supporting the idea, probably influenced by Erasmus and humanism.[102] But Cromwell's role in the 1530s was unique. Cromwell had a deep, personal devotion for the Bible ever

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[97] *LP* 10.1185. Later, in December 1539, William Barlow, Bishop of St. David's, thanked Cromwell for preferring Barnes to the prebend of Lanbedye, and asked him to obtain respite for his debts to the king (*LP* 14 (2) p.688).
[98] J. McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford, 1968), pp.106-199.
[99] A.G.Dickens, *The English Reformation* (2nd edn., London, 1989), pp.130, 142-143.
[100] G. R. Elton, *Reform & Renewal: Thomas Cromwell and the Common Weal* (Cambridge, 1973), p.35. However, one Protestant publisher used by Cromwell, William Marshall, was introducing some non-Lutheran ideas as well, notably against church images. See E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven & London, 1992), pp.382-3; MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p.192. Whether Cromwell specifically authorised this himself is not clear.
[101] *English Historical Documents* 5, pp.805-8, 811-14.
[102] Dickens, *The English Reformation*, p.32; *LP* 4 (1) 40.

since learning Erasmus' Latin New Testament by heart.[103] Lutheran translators like Coverdale and Rogers enjoyed his support and patronage, and so did Richard Taverner, though his religious convictions were less certain. The 'political initiative, planning of publication, the pressure to impose the Great Bible on the English church, all came from the Vice-Gerent Thomas Cromwell', according to A.G. Dickens.[104] Cranmer generously acknowledged the 'pains' Cromwell took in setting forth God's Word, in the process suffering 'slanders, lies and reproaches'. For his diligence, and for persuading the King to approve publication, Cromwell would 'obtain perpetual memory within this realm' and reward in heaven on the great day of judgement.[105]

Foxe eulogised Cromwell for travailing and 'setting up Christ's church', and thanked God for raising up 'this Cromwell his servant' to uproot the monasteries throughout the realm – these 'sinful houses' which rebel against Christ's religion. Thanks to Cromwell, England no longer has 'such swarms of friars and monks possessed in their nests'. His entire life was 'nothing else but a continual care and travail how to advance and further the right knowledge of the gospel, and reform the house of God'. It was he who 'first caused the people to be instructed in the Lord's prayer and creed in English', then put an end to the worst pilgrimages to 'rescue the vulgar people from damnable idolatry'. He reduced the number of 'idle holy days', so that ordinary folk were not prevented from trading on such days and earning a living, and he used his

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[103] Foxe 5, p.363.
[104] The Great Bible was completed in April 1539. For discussions on various translations, and Cromwell's role, see Dickens, *The English Reformation*, p.154-56; Rex, *Henry VIII*, p.123; Foxe 5, pp.410-414; D. Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven & London, 1994), pp.339-59.
[105] Cranmer, *Misc Writings*, pp.344, 346-347.

office to 'procure for them liberty to eat eggs and white meat in Lent'.[106] Foxe was biased of course, but his is not the only testimony available. Cromwell was the 'principal author' of all the 'innovations in religion', according to the French ambassador Marillac.[107] He has 'done more than all others together' in the cause of the 'reformation of religion and the clergy', agreed Archbishop Cranmer, apparently content to be number two in the Reformation party.[108] Cromwell was careful not to overstep the mark, however, and he knew when to be tactful. In more difficult times – in January 1540 after the Six Articles, and after Henry's disappointment on meeting Anne of Cleves – Cromwell told a German delegation that although he was with them in the faith, 'as the world then stood' he would have to toe the line and 'hold whatever the king holds'.[109]

So in the vanguard of the English Reformation stood a layman and statesman, not a theologian or divine. His chief ally in England was Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, himself a recent convert. As a convinced Papalist in the middle 1520s, Cranmer was appalled at Luther's attacks on the pope and the councils.[110] It is unclear exactly when he began to change, but in 1531 he made his first contacts with the continental reformers Martin Bucer and Simon Grynaeus.[111] The following year, as Henry's ambassador to Charles V, Cranmer was able to see for himself the effects of the Reformation in Lutheran Nuremberg, where he also met the Lutheran divine Osiander, and married his niece. (Later Osiander was the only major Lutheran to support

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[106] Foxe 5, pp.376-78, 384.
[107] *LP* 15.766.
[108] *OL* 1, p.15.
[109] Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell* 1, p.279.
[110] MacCulloch, Cranmer, pp.27-28.
[111] Ibid, p.60

Henry in his divorce.) Cranmer was involved also in civil affairs including politics and trade negotiations. During this period he and the Catholic Stephen Gardiner began to go their separate theological ways. After Archbishop Warham died in August 1532, Henry summoned Cranmer home to take his place.[112] In January 1533 Chapuys called him a 'Lutheran'.[113] Even though that term could be applied rather carelessly to anyone opposed in some measure to the old order, there is little doubt that Cranmer was a Reformer by this time.

So Henry had a Lutheran Vice-Gerent and another Lutheran (or near enough) as Archbishop. Such a formidable alliance should have been enough to manipulate or compel a weak-willed king into signing the Augsburg Confession. Henry, however, had a mind of his own in religion, and a slight conflict of interests was soon emerging.

Whereas Henry was urging the Germans to 'come to agreement about Christian doctrine', Elector John Frederick and the Schmalkaldic League were hoping that Henry would 'promote the Gospel and sincere doctrine of faith as the princes have confessed in the Augsburg Confession'.[114] In other words, the Germans had come to a doctrinal agreement already, and that was the Augsburg Confession. They were prepared to discuss it with Henry, but it was not a negotiating document. Henry was invited to become a member of the League, and offered the title 'Defender of the League' as bait; but the League was an association of states that had accepted the Augsburg Confession as a true statement of faith. So if Henry wanted to join, he would have to sign up. A middle way or compromise was not an option.

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[112] Ibid, pp.75-76.
[113] *LP* 6.89, p.35.

Therefore, while Henry wanted to *negotiate* about religion, the Germans wanted him to *accept* the Augsburg Confession. And on this point, Cromwell, though ever the king's loyal servant, had the same *religious* aim as the Germans. Without being aware of it, Henry was facing a conflict of interest on two fronts: first, with the Germans, and then with his own chief minister as well.

More evidence for Cromwell's Lutheran beliefs will be presented as events unfold, and based on three main areas: first, this was the opinion of most of his contemporaries, whether friend or foe; second, his policies as chief minister testify to it; third, the words of the man himself, though few, are compelling.

Points of Dispute

From late 1536 and into 1537 Henry was waiting to hear from the Germans about the return embassy that they had promised him. He was also occupied with domestic events, including the Pilgrimage of Grace and the northern uprisings. It seemed to the English that the Germans were being a little bit tardy, so Cromwell stepped up attempts to get a major Lutheran delegation to England.[115] Henry too was keen, hoping for 'men of wisdom and gravity', and in particular Melanchthon.[116] Eventually a delegation did arrive in June 1538; there was no Melanchthon, but it was an impressive one nonetheless, comprising of Francis Burkhardt, vice-chancellor of the elector of Saxony, Dr. George Boyneburg, a Hessian nobleman, and Frederick Myconius, overseer

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[114] Compare *LP* 9.1014 & 1016, both in Dec. 1535.
[115] McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', pp.190-218; *OL* Vol. 2, pp.520-521.
[116] *LP* 13 (1) 367.

of the church in Gotha. Theological discussions went ahead quickly with Cranmer, Stokesley, Sampson, Robert Barnes and others. As in 1536, good progress was apparently made on justification, the sacraments, church ministers and church rites. News reached Wittenberg that the English divines were as good as the Germans, and also very friendly.[117] About the only problem at this stage concerned penance and confession.

However, the talks were taking longer than expected, and Elector John Frederick had instructed his delegation to deal with three particular thorny points: communion in one kind, private masses and clerical celibacy. For the Lutherans, these issues went right to the heart of the gospel and Christian liberty. At the diet of Augsburg in 1530, it had seemed at one point that the conciliatory Melanchthon might be prepared to give ground on episcopal authority (on the condition that bishops allowed the gospel to be preached freely) but even he was adamant that on no account should the slightest concession be made on communion, the mass and celibacy.[118] Henry, however, still held very traditional views on these subjects, so in 1538 the German delegation saw little point in discussing them at length with the English divines, who could not accept anything that the king disapproved of. Instead the Germans wrote directly to Henry on the 5th of August setting out the Lutheran position once again, emphasising their view that pure Christian doctrine could not be sustained so long as abuses like these remained.

A discussion of this letter and Henry's reply (dated the 23rd of August) will be given in the next chapter. Meanwhile, another potential cloud was looming on the horizon. The negotiations began in June, but also in June,

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[117] *LP* 13 (1) 1437. For full details on the German embassy to England in 1538, see McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', pp.219-85.

Henry summoned Cuthbert Tunstall from Durham to London. No reason was given, though maybe the Catholic side lacked a little weight in the London talks. However, Henry soon decided that he needed Tunstall 'about his person' rather than at the negotiating table, and he appointed the bishop of Llandaff in his place as president of the council of the north.[119] So when the Germans wrote to Henry on the 5th of August – on subjects that would later form the core of the subsequent Act of Six Articles – Henry had Tunstall by his side. Before examining the theological questions, therefore, a few words are necessary on the man Henry chose as his special adviser that summer.

Tunstall was an intelligent, educated Catholic humanist, a friend of Thomas More and Erasmus. As bishop of London in the 1520s he was more willing to burn heretics' books than heretics themselves, whether Lollards or Lutherans. He had shown unexpected patience with Bilney, whom he eventually persuaded to recant.[120] But behind his seeming moderation lay a man deeply opposed to the new gospel from Germany. Tunstall was no stranger to Lutheranism; he had returned to England after visiting the Low Countries shortly before Luther's ninety-five theses had been published in 1517. At one time on his travels he was at Worms, but left five days before Luther arrived for the famous diet in 1521. There is no record that the two men ever met. Still, he was 'in Germany with Luther at the beginning of these opinions and I know how they began', he wrote. He knew too that many 'were minded to Luther', but he begged Wolsey in January 1521 that none of

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[118] Brecht 2, pp.403-4; *CR* 2, cols 122-3, 168-74, 246-9, 280-5.
[119] *LP* 13 (1) 1267-69. The other leading Catholic bishop, Stephen Gardiner, was also recalled in the summer of 1538 – from France, where he had been ambassador for three years. But he arrived too late to be involved with the Lutheran talks, or have any influence over them. See G. Redworth, *In Defence of the Church Catholic: Life of Stephen Gardiner* (Oxford, 1990), pp.79-81.

Luther's books be admitted in England. The whole German problem, he believed, arose because of the huge amounts of money collected by Rome as annates, and the benefits given by the pope to minions such as 'cooks and grooms' rather than the 'virtuous and learned men of the country'. The pope ought to reduce these annates, else he risked losing Germany. But this criticism of the papacy did not lead to approval for Luther's doctrines. He had heard reports about Luther's 'Babylonian Captivity of the Church', and prayed that God would 'keep that book off England'. Nevertheless he admitted that many Augustinians and doctors held the same opinions as Luther in certain points.[121]

In June 1523 Tunstall was urging Erasmus to 'come to grips with this monster' Luther. Like Henry, he accused Luther of making God 'the author of all evil' by denying freewill and ascribing everything to fixed laws of fate, 'so that no-one is free to do right if he wishes to do so'.[122] In October 1526, the year of the Tyndale Bible, Bishop Tunstall warned his archdeacons and city authorities that 'many children of iniquity, maintainers of Luther's sect, blinded through extreme wickedness, wandering from the way of truth and the Catholic faith, have craftily translated the New Testament into our English tongue, intermeddling therewith many heretical articles and erroneous opinions, seducing the common people'.[123] Soon Tunstall was burning copies of Tyndale's New Testament.[124] Then in another letter to More in 1528, authorising him to read heretical books, he called the Lutheran heresy the

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[120] C. Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London, 1938), pp.129-143.
[121] Ibid, p.120. See p.360 for the full letter to Wolsey, dated 29 Jan. 1521.
[122] Ibid, pp.122-23.
[123] Ibid, p.132.
[124] Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, p.190-94.

'foster-daughter of Wyclif', and Luther's doctrines 'vile', 'pestilent', 'wicked', 'outrageous', 'mad incantations', 'monstrous ideas', 'twisting snakes' – as if the bishop was trying to outdo his king in bluster and invective. [125]

Henry's divorce and his conflict with the pope presented Tunstall with a crisis of conscience. A man of considerable learning, he felt that Rome's claim to be the Christian church's universal overseer had little historical foundation. Despite this he supported Queen Catherine to begin with, and not until May 1534, a year after Henry married Anne Boleyn, did he openly pledge his allegiance to the royal supremacy. Henry then sent him to Catherine to try and persuade her to acquiesce in her fate. (She refused.) Why Tunstall changed his mind is not known for definite. Pressure may have been applied (by now both More and Fisher were in the Tower), and some uncharitable tongues mooted it abroad that he was more anxious for his own bishopric than either the queen or the pope. Perhaps also, because Henry was still sound on a lot of traditional Catholic doctrine, Tunstall felt that there would be no danger to the true religion, at least so long as Henry reigned.[126]

So Cuthbert Tunstall was neither Henry's most compliant nor his most favoured bishop. But after Fisher's execution, and with Gardiner away in France, he was the ablest and most learned on the Catholic side. In the summer of 1538, therefore, when the Lutheran delegation was in England, it was not so much a trusted friend that Henry chose to have beside him, but a highly qualified Catholic theologian and scholar. Moreover, that scholar had no love for the Lutherans, and every reason to hope that the negotiations with them would fail.

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[125] Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall*, p.363; Foxe 4, p.697.
[126] Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall*, pp.170-187.

'Unless I can be convinced by Scripture and clear reason, I will not retract', Luther had vowed at Worms, in the Emperor's presence.[127] And in August 1538, no man in England was better equipped to take on the Germans, point by point, from Scripture and reason, than Cuthbert Tunstall, Henry's theological consultant. The honeymoon was drawing to a close.

[127] Brecht 1, p.460.

Chapter 2: The Six Articles

Introduction

The chapter will examine the three disputed points of 1538, and the ensuing Act of Six Articles a year later.

The act is confusing because it cannot be conveniently labelled either medieval Catholic or Lutheran.[1] The reason for its theological imprecision, this chapter will argue, is that King Henry deliberately did not want it to be medieval Catholic or Lutheran, because he had decided to take a theologically independent stance and build his own church his own way. Consequently an act that does not fit any known confessional line, far from perplexing us, is exactly what should be expected from him.

The first stage in trying to understand the rationale behind the act is to examine the three disputed points – communion in one kind, private masses and clerical celibacy – to see just what the issues were, and why they remained unresolved at the end of the 1538 discussions. The relevant source material includes Henry's *Assertion*, the Augsburg Confession and the Roman Catholic reply (the *Confutation*), Melanchthon's *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, and the exchange of letters between the German delegation and King Henry in 1538.[2] A comprehensive summary of all these documents would be far too lengthy, so I have tried to identify the salient points.

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[1] For historiography, see Introduction, p.9.

[2] The German letters were written by Francis Burkhardt, George Boyneburg and Friderick Myconius, on the 5th of August, 1538. Henry replied on the 23rd. The letters are printed in Burnet 4, pp.352-391.

Part 1: The Three Disputed Points

1. Communion in One Kind or Two

Henry's *Assertion* accepted that, in the earliest days of the church, the communicant received both consecrated bread and consecrated wine in the Sacrament. For this reason Henry would not condemn it, and he knew of no fundamental theological argument against it. Despite this, the custom of the whole church should be followed, and that custom was to give the laity the bread only. Henry was unsure exactly when or why the change was made, but he had no time for Luther's critique of it. For one thing, omitting the cup was 'very convenient'.[3]

Henry's view was consistent with the practice in England, where priests taught their flock that, with the bread, they receive both the body and blood of Christ. The theological jargon word for this opinion is 'concomitance', a doctrine dogmatised at the Council of Constance in 1415.[4] *Un*consecrated wine was given as well, but not as part of the sacrament; its purpose was to help the communicant swallow the bread more easily, 'so that no part or piece thereof perchance remain between the teeth'. In country churches and chapels, however, or non-Cathedral churches in cities, some were permitted 'to receive the blood of Christ under the form of wine consecrate'.[5]

The Lutheran case for both kinds was extremely simple: the Holy Sacrament was Christ's institution, and should not be tinkered with. He bid us

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[3] *Assertion,* pp.12-14.

[4] *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo et al. (3rd edn., Bologna, 1973), p.419, lines13-16. See also p.541, line 1, p.547, lines 3-5 for the Council of Florence, 1439, where Aquinas' treatise is cited. The origin of the doctrine is unknown, but it also appears in the writings of Anselm of Canterbury: *PL* 159, col.255.

eat *and* drink, and so we do. Human ideas about the distinction between the priesthood and laity, fears of spilling the wine, problems associated with large congregations and so forth, are not sufficient to set aside a divine ordinance.[6]

Henry was not convinced. In his letter to the Germans he argued that the bread on its own must contain *both* Christ's body and blood, because a body without blood is inconceivable. He would not outlaw communing in both kinds, but claimed a Scriptural warrant for one only. On the first Easter Sunday the risen Christ appeared to the travellers to Emmaus, and after they invited Him into their house He 'took bread, and blessed it and brake, and gave to them'. Later the believers in Jerusalem 'continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread'. Neither text mentions the wine, and slightly mischievously, Henry marvelled why the Lutherans, who made so much ado about the authority of Scripture and the liberty of the Christian, refused to allow this liberty of one kind only even though it is sanctioned in Holy Writ.[7]

Compared with his *Assertion*, Henry's letter in 1538 was more polished (with Tunstall on hand to help). The later Henry argued more from Scripture than Constance or church custom. (The *Assertion* has no quotes from Scripture.) Despite this, his stance had not fundamentally changed. He seemed to be testing the Lutherans to see if they would give way. Perhaps he had heard of the Catholic offer at Augsburg to allow the cup to the laity,

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[5] W. Lyndwood, *Provinciale: The Text of the Canons*, ed. J.V.Bullard & H.Chalmer Bell (London, 1929), p.3.
[6] AC/*Apology*, Article 22, Tappert, pp.49-51, 236-38, *BSLK*, pp.85-86, 328-32; Burnet 4, pp.354-55 (Germans' letter).
[7] Burnet 4, pp.374-80. Scripture texts: Luke 24.30; Acts 2.42. The *Confutation* quoted these texts as well. Melanchthon agreed that they might well refer to the Sacrament, but they do not support one kind only, because according to the ordinary use of language, by naming one part the other is implied. See *Confutation*, Article 22, *CR* 27, cols.129-35; *Apology*, Article 22, Tappert, p.237.7, *BSLK*, p.330.7.

provided the Lutherans stopped insisting that doing so was essential, and how Melanchthon tried to be as understanding as possible.[8] Henry was also relishing this theological debate, quoting Bible verses back to the champions of *sola Scriptura*. Maybe he felt he had scored a point, because concomitance was not discussed in the Augsburg Confession or in the Germans' letter to the king. There was a brief reference to it in the Smalcald Articles of 1537; there Luther said that even if it were true, it made no difference because Christ's ordinance of both bread and wine stands regardless.[9] Henry may or may not have known about this, but so far as he was concerned in August 1538, this was an outstanding matter, and the ball was back in the Lutheran court.

2. Private Masses

To illustrate the medieval doctrine of the mass, here is Professor Francis Clark's summary of the Eucharistic teaching of Thomas Aquinas, a pillar of medieval orthodoxy:

> 'The Eucharist is the representative image of the bloody immolation of Christ on Calvary; it is itself a sacrifice and an oblation containing the same Victim really present; it is not a different sacrifice from Calvary; in it Christ, now glorious and impassible, can suffer no more; He offers Himself at the altar through the instrumentality of the priests of His church; the

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[8] Brecht 2, p.403. As things turned out, there was no agreement, because this was an issue on which Melanchthon refused to yield. See Chapter 1, p.62.
[9] Smalcald Articles, Tappert, p.311.2-3, *BSLK*, p.451.2-3.

propitiatory effects of His passion flow to men through the mass, for the remission of sins and the welfare of the living and the dead'.[10]

Nothing in the medieval church aroused Luther's fire and fury as much as this.

The reason Luther so loathed the Roman mass was *not* the belief in the real, corporal presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Luther vigorously defended that against Zwingli and the Sacramentaries. He had no patience either with radicals who preached that salvation by faith alone rendered the Sacraments unnecessary. For Luther, the Sacraments were a 'means of grace' for receiving forgiveness of sins, as he explained when attacking Dr. Karlstadt, the German radical Sacramentary and iconoclast:

'We treat forgiveness of sins in two ways. First, how it is achieved and won; second, how it is distributed. Christ has achieved it on the cross, it is true. But He has not distributed or given it on the cross. He has not won it in the Supper or the Sacrament. There He has distributed and given it, through the Word, as also in the gospel, where it is preached. He has won it once and for all upon the cross. But the distribution takes place continuously, before and after, from the beginning to the end of the world..... If now I seek forgiveness of sins, I do not run to the cross, for I will not find it there. Nor must I hold to the suffering of Christ, as Dr. Karlstadt trifles, in knowledge or remembrance, for I will not find it there

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[10] F. Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (2nd edn., Devon, 1980) pp.77-78. Prof. Clark goes on to show substantial agreement between Scotists and Thomists, pp.81-90. For an analysis of Fisher on the sacrifice of the mass, see R. Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.129-34.

either. But I will find in the Sacrament or gospel the word which distributes, presents, offers and gives to me the forgiveness which was won on the cross'.[11]

The same appears in Luther's Catechisms on the Words of Institution, 'This is my body, this is my blood shed for the forgiveness of sins:

'These words, along with physical eating and drinking are the chief part of the sacrament. The one who believes these words has what they say and record, namely, the forgiveness of sins'.[12]

And:

The reason we go to the sacrament is ' because there we receive such a treasure by and in which we obtain forgiveness of sins'.[13]

So Luther agreed with the Catholics that the Sacrament conveys the benefits that Christ won at Calvary to mankind. The cause of the controversy was *how* they are conveyed, and to whom. According to the Catholics, through the *sacrifice* of the mass Christ *is offered* in an unbloody immolation by the priest to the Father, to remit the sins of the living and the departed. For Lutherans the Sacrament is Christ's *gift* – My Body and Blood '*given* for you' – to the communicant, not to anyone absent whether alive or dead. Accompanying

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[11] *WA* 18, pp.203 (line 27) - 204 (line 9); *LW* 40, pp.213-214. See also *LW* 37, pp.192-93.
[12] *Small Catechism*, Tappert, p.352.8, *BSLK*, p.520.8.
[13] *Large Catechism*, Tappert, p.449.22, *BSLK*, p.711.22.

this gift is the promise of remission of sins, which the communicant receives by faith. Nothing is sacrificed, nothing is offered; so the Papists, stormed Luther, have taken Christ's gift and promise and wickedly distorted it into a work to be performed by us or by a priest on our behalf. 'Thus Christ has not won grace for us, but we want to win grace for ourselves through our works by offering to God His Son's body and blood. This is the true and chief abomination and the basis of all blasphemy in the papacy'.[14]

So this was the fundamental difference between the two sides on the mass. It was the difference between salvation by faith in Christ's promise, and salvation by – as the Lutherans accused the Papists – a work meriting forgiveness of sins. In other words, it was justification by faith alone versus justification by works (or rather, faith supplemented by works). Luther's theology of the Eucharist was inextricably bound up with that of justification, because only by faith in the Words of Institution does the communicant receive forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament.

The Lutherans recognised that the word 'sacrifice' had been applied to the mass since the earliest days of the church. Melanchthon addressed this point in the *Apology* and defined two kinds of 'sacrifice'. The first is propitiatory, which makes satisfaction for guilt, merits remission of sins and reconciles us to God. The second kind is Eucharistic, which does *not* merit remission of sins, but is rendered by those who have been justified – by baptised believers – as a thanksgiving. The only propitiatory sacrifice was Christ's on the cross. Eucharistic sacrifices include prayer, faith, good works,

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[14] *LW* 38, pp.117-118. Also, how the mass as a good work and a sacrifice is the greatest abuse of all in the church, *Babylonian Captivity*, *WA* 6, p.512, lines 7-10, p.523, lines 8-10; *LW* 36, pp.35,51. And how the mass is the abomination of desolation and the source of all evils in the papacy, *WA* 10 (2), p.220, lines 5-22.

charity, Christian service, confession, receiving communion and others. Thus the holy fathers used the term 'sacrifice', according to Melanchthon.[15]

On the private mass in particular (usually held for the benefit of some named departed soul, with a view to helping it get through purgatory a bit quicker) Luther had, if possible, even greater contempt. In his 'Misuse of the Mass' of 1521 he attacked it on three fronts. First, the Papist mass is based on a false theology of the priesthood; all believers are priests, and the true office of the priest is to preach the gospel of forgiveness, not to 'sacrifice' the mass. Second, according to the Words of Institution, the Eucharist is a promise, not a sacrifice (This is my *body given for you for the remission of sins..... take, eat, drink*; not for you to *sacrifice or offer*). Luther also attacked the cult of the saints and purgatory. The third part was a polemic against the papal priesthood, which has obliterated the gospel and the true priesthood of Christ.[16] Then in 1525 he published the 'Abomination of the Secret Mass', a section by section attack on the ceremony of the mass.[17] Eight years later, in 'The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests', he wrote that 'whoever has true Christian faith cannot attend private masses', and particularly condemned priests for administering the sacrament to themselves alone and no one else. This was more than an abuse of Christ's institution; it overturned it completely, and '*on that account no one can or should believe that Christ's body and blood are there, because His ordinance is not there'* (italics mine).[18]

Because this led some to wonder whether Luther was acquiring Zwinglian views, he decided to clarify his meaning by writing an open letter to a fictitious

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[15] *Apology*, Article 24, Internet, Parts 30-32, Tappert, pp.252-63, *BSLK*, pp.353-71.
[16] 'The Misuse of the Mass' (*LW* 36, 127-230) is a translation of the German version of his '*De abroganda missa privata*', 1521 (*WA* 8, 411-76).
[17] *LW* 36, pp.309-28.

recipient in 1534. He believed that Christ's body and blood are truly present wherever the mass is 'celebrated according to Christ's ordinance, be it among us Lutherans or under the papacy or in Greece or in India, even if it is only under one kind – which is nonetheless wrong and an abuse'. But the 'perverted ordinance' of the mass, 'opposed to the ordinance of Christ' was a different matter.[19]

The 'sacrifice' doctrine, therefore, was totally irreconcilable with the Lutheran gospel. Henry must have known this, and at some point the idea occurred to him that he could make it more palatable.

The Germans' letter to Henry in August 1538 restated the Lutheran line, then stressed that the church will never be purged of false doctrine so long as private masses are retained.[20] The king's reply is one of the most puzzling doctrinal statements that students of history are ever likely to come across. The following is a summary, with comments of mine at relevant stages in order to develop the argument.

He began by taking up the Lutheran point that private masses should be abolished because of the impious doctrines that have been introduced into the church (that masses automatically – ex opere operato – merit grace, and can be applied for others, whether living of dead). In that case, public masses should be abolished as well, because the same teachings apply to them, and the Germans have *not* abolished the public mass.[21]

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[18] *LW* 38, pp.169, 194.
[19] *LW* 38, pp.215-34; see especially pp.224-26.
[20] Burnet 4, pp.355-365. For background, see also AC, Article 24, Tappert, pp.56-61, *BSLK*, pp.91-97; *Confutation*, *CR* 27, cols.146-57; *Apology*, Internet, parts 29-34, Tappert, pp.249-268; *BSLK*, pp.349-77.
[21] Burnet 4, p.380.

Note that Henry has tacitly admitted that these teachings *are* abuses, but he has also overlooked the fact that the Lutherans had reformed the public mass, taking out all the 'sacrifice' language.

Private masses, Henry continued, if done rightly and decently, were useful services, where Christians could confess their sins, implore and receive God's mercy, and offer themselves as living sacrifices acceptable to God, resolving to correct their lives and confirm their faith in Christ.[22]

Note here that a complete silence has descended on the real purpose of the private mass – its benefits for the departed.

Then after a little point scoring on the frequency of the mass, Henry got down to Scripture. 'As oft as ye eat this bread', said St. Paul, suggesting frequent communion was desirable. Also, St. Luke described how the first Christians used to 'break bread from house to house'. In what must have seemed an eccentric line in exegesis to the Lutherans, Henry concluded that as private masses are often more convenient than public ones, and as congregations of early Christians met in houses, so the private mass has a Scriptural warrant.[23]

Now Henry homed in on the sticking point – the mass as a sacrifice. Christ's death, he admitted, was indeed the only propitiatory sacrifice, where He was once and for all offered for us. The only remaining sacrifices are spiritual, the righteousness of faith and fruits of faith. (So Henry was starting to sound rather Lutheran). But then, in an obviously carefully prepared theological tactic, the king marvelled why the Lutherans objected to calling the mass a sacrifice when there on the eucharistic altar is the body and blood of

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[22] Burnet 4, p.381.
[23] Burnet 4, pp.381-83; 1 Corinthians 7.26; Acts 2.46.

Christ our priest, who was sacrificed for us. And not only was Christ our Sacrifice in the Sacrament, but we also, the members of His body on earth, offer ourselves as living sacrifices, as Paul wrote to the Romans. Thus the fathers used the term. The whole service is therefore a sacrifice of praise. Then Henry closed with Malachi's prophecy: 'From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered to my name and a pure offering'. What else can this be if not Christ, who is present in the mass under the appearances of bread and wine? For there is nothing that we can offer to God that merits the name of 'pure offering', because all our righteousnesses are filthy rags.[24]

Analysing Henry's letter, four points stand out.

First: Henry made no attempt to justify the real reason for private mass – the benefit for departed. He also avoided the role of the priest in offering the mass. Without these the letter was obviously inadequate as a Catholic statement. It was quite unlike the *Assertion*, in which Henry condemned Luther for seeking to 'destroy the chief and only sacrifice which reconciles us to God, and which is always offered for the sins of the people'.[25] This absence was obviously deliberate, not an oversight.

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[24] Burnet 4, pp.383-84. Some key phrases, Sacramentum autem non eucharistae sacrificium non esse arbitramini, quod unum sacrificium sit propitiatorium mors Christi, et cum is ultra non moritur, qui semel tantum pro nobis oblatus est, nullam restat ultra sacrificium, nisi cultus spiritualis, hoc est, justicia fidei et fructus fidei..... Itaque si Christus et sacerdotus esset, et sacrificium, et hostia, ubicunque est Christi, ibi est hostia nostra, ibi est sacrificium nostrum; at si in sacramento altaris est verum corpus Christi, et verus sanguinis Christi, quo pacto manente veritate corporis et sanguinis Domini, non est ibi sacrificium nostrum? Scripture texts, Romans, 12,1, obsecro itaque vos fratres per misericordiam Dei ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem sanctam Deo placentem rationabile obsequium vestrum (Vulgate). Henry also used the phrase 'sacrificium incruentum'. For the 'pure offering' - Malachi, 1.11.
[25] Also, the mass was a sacrifice, not a promise. 'As Christ wrought a good work in His Last Supper and on the cross, neither can it be denied that the priest represents, and performs, the same thing in the mass'. *Assertion*, pp.30-32, 38, 45-49, 105.

Second: Henry's idea was to retain the 'Catholic' private mass, but for devotional and even *evangelical* reasons: confessing sins, receiving God's mercy, confirmation of faith, and presenting ourselves a living sacrifice. As the Lutherans had kept the public mass (though only after altering it) he maintained that the private one should be kept as well. At times Henry (who, unlike lay people, could commune and confess frequently, even daily) seemed to be confusing the propitiatory *private* mass with the devotional *low* mass.[26] However, it is scarcely credible that Henry did not realise what a private mass was for, even if Tunstall had not been there to remind him.

Third: Henry has given a definition of the 'sacrifice' of the mass, with all propitiatory language taken out. Obviously this falls well short of medieval teaching, but Henry felt it accorded with the teachings of the fathers (he named Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome and Augustine, but gave no direct quote). So if this was what the fathers taught and believed, there was no reason why the Lutherans should not accept it. Lutherans believed in the presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and the wine, so how could they of all people object to calling the mass a sacrifice, when the body and blood of Christ sacrificed for us was present on the altar?

Fourth: Henry has avoided the Lutheran argument that the mass is a promise to be received by faith.

It would be fascinating to know who was the more perplexed by all of this – the Lutherans or Cuthbert Tunstall, Henry's adviser. Tunstall's own views were orthodox and clear. When in 1548 Cranmer put eleven questions concerning the Sacrament of the altar to the bishops, Tunstall replied that the

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[26] See E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, New Haven & London, 1992), pp.98-100, 112-114). However, Henry's letter contains nothing about gazing at the host, or other hoped for

sacrament received by one member of Christ does profit another, and that 'oblation and sacrifice of Christ in the Mass is the presenting of Christ by the priests in commemoration of His passion.....available to 'both quick and dead in the faith of Christ'.[27] Both these points are orthodox, but both are conspicuously missing from Henry's letter. Now if Tunstall could state such opinions openly in Edward's reign, risking the loss of his bishopric and possibly even the Tower for doing so, there should be no need to hide them in Henry's.[28]

So the doctrine in this letter to the Germans was the king's, not Tunstall's. The bishop was on hand to advise, but not dictate. Our Dominicus Henricus had started formulating dogmas of his own, which did not conform to any known sixteenth century confessional position. It was certainly not Lutheran, but it was not adequately Catholic either. If he was trying to reach an acceptable compromise then he was being extremely naïve, because this would never be accepted by any true believer on either side. Besides, the letter does not read like a compromise proposal.

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benefits like preservation in childbirth or safe travel (Duffy, p.100).

[27] C. Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London, 1938), p.384.

[28] There may be a faint hint of the role of the priest in Henry's letter in the reference to the 'consecration of the body and blood of the Lord'. ('Quod ibi fiat consecratio corporis et sanguinis Domini in memoriam mortis ejus, qui, ut inquit Paulus, pro pecacatis offerens hostiam, in sempiternum sedet ad dexteram Dei, una enim oblatione consummavit in sempiternum sanctificatos'. Burnet 4, p.383). This echoed that part of the Sarum Pontifical, the Catholic sacrament for ordaining priests, where the priest's hands are blessed and anointed with the prayer that they may be sanctified to 'consecrate the sacrifices which are offered for the sins and negligences of thy people'. This remained in force in England until Cranmer's 1550 Ordinal for the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons replaced it. (Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation*, pp.192-93). It was also consistent with the Bishops' Book of 1537, in which the priest was to 'consecrate the blessed body of Christ in the sacrament'. But this, like Henry's letter, was hardly an adequate medieval Catholic statement. In 1543, however, when talks with Germans had finished and all hope of a religious settlement ended, it was amended to 'consecrating and offering'. Compare Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, p.96, 'The Sacrament of Orders', with *The King's Book*, ed. Lacey (London, 1932), p.66.

Henry's comments on the 'sacrifice' provide the clue to the way that his mind was working. Henry claimed that he used the word in the same way that the fathers did, and here he had a point, as the following section will show.

The Mass: Sacrificial Language in the Fathers

In the first and second centuries, church leaders like Clement, Justin and Irenaeus applied the words 'offering' and 'sacrifice' freely to all kinds of pious works, like prayer, almsgiving, and also the Eucharist, or at least taking part in the service and offering the bread and the wine as fruits of the earth (like righteous Abel) for consecration. However, at this stage we are some distance away from the medieval propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead.[29]

The following quote from Cyprian (died AD 258) is a little more specific:

'For if Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is Himself the chief priest of God the Father, and has offered Himself a sacrifice to the Father, and has commanded this to be done in commemoration of Himself, certainly that priest truly discharges the office of Christ who imitates that which Christ did; and then he offers a true and full sacrifice in the church to God the Father when he proceeds to offer it according to what he sees Christ Himself to have offered'.[30]

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[29] Clement, *First Epistle*, chaps. 40-41: *PG* 1, cols.287-91; *ANF* 1, pp.16-17. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chaps. 65-66: *PG* 6, cols.427-30; *ANF* 1, p.185. Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. 22: *PG* 6, cols.522, 563-64; *ANF* 1, p.205, 215. Ibid, chap. 41, *PG* 6, cols.563-64; *ANF* 1, p.215. Ibid, chap. 117; *PG* 6, cols.746-47; *ANF* 1, p.257. The Didache, probably an early second century work, also identified the sacrifice of the Eucharist with Malachi's verse (14.1). Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 4, chaps.17.4-18.4: *PG* 7 (1), cols.1023-27; *ANF* 1, pp.484-86. Ibib, Book 5, chap. 2: *PG* 7 (2) col.1123-27; *ANF* 1, pp.527-28.

[30] Nam si Jesus Christus Dominus et Deus noster ipse est summus sacerdotus Dei Patris, et sacrificium Patri se ipsum primus obtulit, et hoc fieri in sui commemorationem praecipit, utique ille sacerdos vice Christi vere fungitur qui id quod Christus fecit imitatur, et sacrificium verum

Then in the same epistle, 'the passion of the Lord is the sacrifice we offer'.[31] However, Cyprian too used the word 'sacrifice' very widely; elsewhere he called repentance a sacrifice, based on Psalm 51 – that the 'sacrificies of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise'.[32] As one man's repentance can hardly be propitiatory for another's, we have still not yet arrived at the fully developed medieval sacrificial theology of the mass.

Canon 18 of Nicea in AD325 gave directions for the 'offering of the body of Christ', so by the time of the earlier Ecumenical Councils the language of offering and sacrifice was well established.[33] However, it is still not certain that these fathers used the word 'sacrifice' in quite the same sense as Lombard and Aquinas were later to do. Augustine defined it as 'the visible sacrament or sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice'. Thus it could include Psalm 51 (as Cyprian) and the one before it – 'Offer unto me the sacrifice of praise'.[34] Augustine also called Christ the 'supreme Sacrifice':

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et plenum tunc offert in Ecclesia Deo Patri, si sic incipiat offerre secundum quod Christum videat obtulisse' *Epist.* 63.14; *PL* 4, col.397; *ANF* 5, p.362.

[31] Passio est enim Domini sacrificium quod offerimus. *Epist.* 63.17; *PL* 4, cols.398-99; *ANF.* 5, p.363.

[32] *Epist.* 77.3; *PL.* 4, col.430; *ANF* 5, p.403. Psalm, 51.17.

[33] Quod nec regula nec consuetudo permittit, ut ab his qui potestatem non habent offerendi illi qui offerunt Christi corpus accipiant - *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, p.14, lines 35-38; *NPNF* 14, p.39. See also Basil (named but not quoted directly in Henry's letter to the Germans): 'After the priest has completed the sacrifice' (απαξ γαρ την θυσιαν του ιερεως τελειωσαντος), *PG* 32, cols.485-86. Also Ambrose: how priests offer the sacrifice for the people (offeramus pro populo sacrificium) – for though Christ is not seen to be offered, yet He is Himself offered when the body of Christ is offered (quia etsi nunc Christus non videtur offere, tamen ipse offeretur in terris quando Christi corpus offeretur), *PL* 14, col.1102.

[34] Sacrificium ergo visibile invisibilis sacrificii sacramentum, id est sacrum signum, est. Psalm, 50.14 - Immola Deo sacrificium laudis. *City of God*, 10.5; *PL* 41, col.282.

'Thus He is both the Priest who offers and the Sacrifice offered. And He designed that there should be a daily sign of this in the *sacrifice* of the church, which, being His body, learns to offer herself through Him' (Emphasis mine.)[35]

Augustine described Christ being 'immolated' in the Eucharist – but figuratively, not literally. Just as we call Good Friday the day of Christ's Passion and Easter Sunday that of His resurrection, without meaning that He dies and rises again every Easter, so also, in that sense, Christ is immolated in the Eucharist:

> 'Was not Christ once for all offered up in His own Person as a Sacrifice? And yet, is He not likewise offered up in the sacrament as a sacrifice, not only in the special solemnities of Easter, but also daily among our congregations.....'[36]

Obviously since the days of Clement and Justin a theological evolution had been under way. Intercession for departed souls was now as orthodox as calling the Eucharist a sacrifice:

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[35] Per hoc et sacerdos est, ipse offerens, ipse est oblatio. Cujus rei sacramentum quotidianum esse voluit Ecclesiae sacrificium, quae cum ipsius capitis corpus sit, se ipsam per ipsum discit offere. (*City of God,* 10.20; *PL* 41, col.298. Also, 'the church is offered in the offering she makes to God'- quod in ea re quam offert, ipsa offeratur. *City of God*, 10.6; *PL* 41, col.284.

[36] Nonne semel immolatus est Christus in seipso, et tamen in sacramento non solus per omnes Paschae solemnitates, sed omni die populis immolatur. *Epist.* 98.9 To Boniface. *PL* 33, cols.363-64; *NPNF* 1, pp.409-10. The same thought later appeared in Peter Lombard's works – see Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation*, pp.75-76, *Sententiarum*, lib.4, dist.12, cap.5, *PL* 192, col.1097A.

Nor can it be denied that the souls of the dead are benefited by the piety of their living friends, who offer the sacrifice of the Mediator, or give alms in the church on their behalf. .... Sacrifices, either of the altar or of alms, are offered on behalf of all the baptised dead; they are thank offerings for the very good, they are propitiatory offerings for the not very bad.[37]

So the Eucharist was a sacrifice and an offering, with at least some benefit to the dead. The benefit was brought, however, not only by the Sacrament itself, but also the prayers of the faithful, especially at the Eucharist service. (This was Henry's view too.) But the direct connection between salvation and the *act* of consecrating and offering the body and blood of Christ was still missing.

By the time of Gregory the Great the picture was more complete. Christ can die no more, yet He is 'immolated for us again in the mystery of this sacred oblation', and thus we can 'estimate the value for us of this sacrifice, which *for our forgiveness* ever imitates the Passion of the Only-Begotten Son.....' (Emphasis mine.)[38] So the oblation is the Eucharist sacrifice offered for our forgiveness. Here and in Gregory's homilies the language is more propitiatory:

'The Sacrifice of the holy altar when offered with tears and goodness of heart, singularly supports our absolution. For He who in Himself, being

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[37] Neque negandum est defunctorum animas pietate suorum viventium relevari, cum pro illis sacrificium Mediatoris offertur, vel eleemosynae in Ecclesia fiunt.....Cum ergo sacrificia sive altaris sive quarumcumque eleemosynarum probaptizatis defunctis omnibus offeruntur, pro valde bonis gratiarum actiones sunt; pro non valde malis propitiationes sunt..... Augustine, *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Charity,* Chap.110; *PL* 40, col.283; *NPNF* 3, pp.272-73. Similar thought in Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Philippians,* 3.4; *PG* 62, col.204; *NPNF* 13, p.197.

risen from the dead, dies no more; yet through this Sacrifice in His own mystery He suffers again for us. For as often as we offer unto Him the sacrifice of His Passion, so often do we renew to ourselves His Passion for our absolution.[39]

Additionally Gregory's Dialogues contained a number of stories of the efficacy of the mass for both the living and the dead. A sailor was saved from drowning, and a prisoner's chains fell off, when a mass was said for them.[40] Thirty masses freed the soul of one Justus from purgatory, while seven did the same for a spirit doomed to toil in baths of sulphur.[41]

A development of thought can be discerned from this necessarily brief survey of some of the best known fathers' writings. In the earliest times the word 'sacrifice' was liberally applied to various pious activities including prayer and worship. On the Eucharist in particular there are three identifiable stages in this development. In the first, the bread and wine – the fruits of the earth – are offered for consecration (Justin/Irenaeus). In the second, the sacrament is called a unique, unbloody sacrifice and offering of the church (Cyprian, the early Councils, Augustine). Thirdly there is a more propitiatory sacrifice availing for the dead as well as the living (Gregory). With the benefit of hindsight it is not difficult to see how the first of these could evolve into the

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[38] Pro nobis iterum in hoc mysterio sacrae oblationis immolatur..... Hinc ergo pensemus quale sit pro nobis hoc sacrificium, quod pro absolutione nostra passionem unigenti Fillii semper imitatur. Gregory, *Dial.* 4, Chaps.58-59; *PL* 77, cols.425-28.

[39] 'Singulariter namque ad absolutionem nostram oblata cum lacrymis et benigitate mentis sacri altaris hostia suffragatur, quia is qui in se resurgens a mortuis jam non moritur, adhuc per hanc in suo mysterio pro nobis iterum patitur. Nam quoties ei hostiam suae passionis offerimus, toties nobis ad absolutionem nostram passionem illius reparamus'. Gregory, *Hom. in Ev.* 37.7; *PL*.76, col.1279.

[40] *Dial.* 4.57; *PL* 77, cols.424-25.

third via the second. Even so, pinpointing the exact time at which each theological mutation took place is more problematic, mainly because every writer dealt with the subject in a non-controversial, non-polemical style, not as someone trying to introduce a new doctrine.[42]

Private Masses: Summary

The relevance of the above to Henry's letter is this: of all the Eucharistic theologies considered, his own – that the mass is a sacrifice because there on the altar is Christ our Priest and Sacrifice – is closest to the middle Patristic group comprising Cyprian, the early Councils and Augustine. And this surely is exactly what we would expect from Henry VIII, knowing his veneration of the fathers and the councils, when there was no papacy, and Christian kings ruled as God's anointed. His doctrine was neither medieval Catholic nor Lutheran, but neither was it some vague middle way. Henry 's aim was a 'Patristic church': Cyprian, Augustine, Chrysostom and the Councils were Henry's guiding lights, not the pope, nor Aquinas, nor Luther, not Cuthbert Tunstall either.

It may sound rather reasonable, but it is not quite the whole truth. When in January 1541 Edward Crome was forced to recant, he had to confess, among other things, that 'public and private masses are a profitable

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[41] *Dial.* 4.55; *PL.*77, cols.416-21. See also discussions on Gregory in Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice*, pp.57-58, 60, 405, 462 fn 87; F. Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great, His Place in History and Thought* (London, 1905), vol. 2, pp.416-17.

[42] See also discussions in J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (5th rev. edn., London, 1977), pp.449-55; J. Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago, 1971), pp.146-47, 168-69; D. Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, vol. 1 (London, 1909), pp.46-55, 109-32. Francis Clark has no chapter devoted exclusively to the fathers, though patristic quotes are included in various parts of his book: *Eucharistic Sacrifice*, Index, pp.569-82.

sacrifice as well for the living as for the dead'.[43] So Henry's letter was hardly an adequate statement of the teaching of his own church.

Henry's inconsistency could be due to uncertainty, for maybe he was still a little unsettled in his own mind on what is by no means an easy subject. But with Tunstall beside him, that is virtually impossible. A far more likely explanation is that in 1541 the religious climate had changed. In August 1538 the Lutheran policy was in full swing, and hopes were high that progress and possibly an alliance could be made. Henry was at the religious negotiating table, and it is just possible that the propitiatory sacrifice availing for the departed might, like relics and pilgrimages, have been expendable in the Henrician church. Henry knew that there was no chance of the Lutherans agreeing on masses for the dead, but perhaps they *might* be persuaded them to accept a less offensive definition of the sacrifice. (So Henry seemed to be thinking.) By the time of the Crome case, however, the Lutheran policy had been abandoned, and Henry was taking a harder anti-Protestant line.[44]

The section on the private mass can now be summarised. In August 1538 Henry was negotiating, drawing up his own dogmas, engaging in and enjoying some theological parleying; but unfortunately acting like the infuriating boss who won't leave the details to others. Henry had a theological

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[43] *OL* 1, p.214; A. Ryrie, 'English Evangelical Reformers in the Last Years of Henry VIII' (Oxford D.Phil., 2000), pp.49, 148. I have brought this in here as perhaps the best example of Henry's inconsistency. Actually 1541 was a strange year for Catholic and Protestant alike – see Chapter 4 on Cromwell's fall, pp.245-46, and discussions in MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp.283-86. Note also, for the sake of Christian charity, prayers for the dead in masses were authorised in the Ten Articles of 1536, though the exact state of the departed was known only to God, and Rome's pardons were condemned: C.H.Williams (ed), *English Historical Documents*, Vol. 5, 1485-1588 (London, 1967), p.805. The 'sacrifice' issue was not discussed in the section on the Eucharist in the King's Book, 1543, though there is a brief reference under 'Orders' to the priest 'consecrating and offering' the body and blood of Christ: (*King's Book*, ed. Lacey (London, 1932), pp.50-57, 66.

[44] Admittedly Henry's letter does not contain any offer to 'trade' dogmas. However, it was not Henry's last word either. As will be explained later in the chapter, he was looking forward to hearing from the Germans again - see pp.129-31.

wheeze based on his knowledge of the fathers: keep the private mass for devotional rather than propitiatory reasons, and agree on a less offensive definition of the 'sacrifice'. Because he was Defender of Faith, he no doubt convinced himself at least that it was a splendid idea. It may seem reasonable in parts, but it was extraordinarily naïve in others, though nobody in England was going to tell him that. For Henry had missed, or rather avoided, the burning issue of the day: whether the mass was a propitiatory sacrifice to be offered, or a promise to be received. There could be no settlement with the Lutherans until that was resolved.

Sometimes when disputes arise amongst 'experts', a clever amateur can break the deadlock. Unfortunately, that was not the case this time. As will be seen soon, the theological inventiveness of our Dominicus Henricus would leave the Germans hugely underwhelmed, much to the king's chagrin.

3. Clerical Celibacy

The story of the much married monarch who became an indefatigable champion of a celibate clergy, all the while not realising that his favourite prelate was secretly married to the niece of a Lutheran divine, contains all the elements of a religious comedy. The theological arguments can be scrutinised here, though the real explanation for Henry's attitude may include psychological and emotional factors as well.

The Lutheran case for clerical marriage, summarised in the Augsburg Confession, was as follows. It began with an attack on the scandalous lives of immoral Papist priests, which the state of marriage was instituted to avoid. St. Paul was quoted – 'Because of fornication, let each man have his own wife' –

as the divine authority allowing both laymen and clergy to marry. Few men have the 'gift of celibacy' (so the Lutherans called it) because, as Jesus said to the disciples, 'not all can receive it'. The directive to Timothy to 'let a bishop be husband of one wife' shows that it was customary for priests to marry in the ancient church. Forbidding marriage is condemned in Scripture as 'a doctrine of devils'. The law of celibacy was a papal device contrary to divine, natural and civil law, and also the ancient canons, and has caused immense offence and scandal.[45]

Marriage, therefore, was a concession to human frailty (or male frailty at least). For the sake of convenience, this can be called the 'concession argument'. It implies that if celibacy were possible, it would also be preferable, and in fact the *Apology* admitted that 'virginity is a more excellent gift than marriage'.[46] So maybe it was not the most enthusiastic or convincing way to promote married clergy, and it may make us wonder how courtship was conducted in sixteenth century Saxony ('Madam, as I lack the gift of continence I propose to take you as wife', perhaps).

Actually the Lutherans had a much more positive attitude to marriage than their confessional statements suggest. They sharply attacked medieval churchmen who, they felt, treated it dismissively. In 1522 Melanchthon criticised Jerome for 'superstitiously extolling celibacy'.[47] A year later Luther wrote a commentary on 1 Corinthians 7, a vigorous defence of the married state as a divine and worthy institution (though here too we find the concession argument: marriage serves as a 'help and means against

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[45] AC, Article 23, Tappert, pp.51-56, *BSLK*, pp.86-91; 1 Corinthians 7.1; Matthew 19.11; 1 Timothy 3.2; 4.1.3.
[46] *Apology*, Internet, part 28, Tappert, p.244.38, p.249.69, *BSLK*, p.340.38, 348.69.
[47] *CR* 15, col.441.

unchastity', and whoever uses it 'to avoid fornication' has St. Paul for an 'advocate').[48] At first Melanchthon had misgivings about Luther's marrriage to Katherine von Bora, a former nun, fearing that it might harm the cause of the Reformation; however, he soon overcame them. Their own marriages were, by all accounts, happy ones. If anything Luther's love for the married state and his wife increased as he grew older. Two years after Melanchthon's wife, Katherine, died in 1557, he wrote of his 'passionate and sorrowful' yearning for her, and 'so it is that I miss her everywhere'.[49]

So the 'concession' argument may give a slightly misleading impression of the Lutherans' real, inward feelings about marriage (and their own wives). They sound as though they would have liked to be bolder, but deference to a long-held tradition of celibacy as a high spiritual virtue held them back. Nevertheless, this was the line they took in the major confessional statements; this was how the case for married clergy was put to the world. Although they strongly condemned the papal decree enforcing celibacy, the Lutherans never questioned the fundamental 'Catholic' doctrine that celibacy was something rather special. The reaction is not difficult to imagine. Treating marriage as a remedy for priests who could not control their sexual drive must have sounded to pious Catholic ears like lowering the standards, rather like modern liberals campaigning for laws on, say, cannabis to be relaxed because so many people are using it. Such a tactic invariably ends up provoking a reaction from more conservative folk. Besides, what a slur (though unintentional) on the cherished sacerdotal system to propose that priests – men ordained of God to consecrate the body and blood of Christ in

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[48] *LW* 28, pp.1-56; quote from p.13, last para.

the mass – should need concessions to avoid temptations. Priests were supposed to be better than ordinary churchgoers and less inclined to sin, or at least better qualified to resist it.

The Catholic response was unsurprising. At Augsburg they condemned the 'violation of celibacy and the illicit transition to marriage', upheld the superiority of celibacy, and brushed aside Lutheran pleas that marriage should be permitted as a 'remedy for infirmity', thereby minimising the risk of immorality. Rigorous ascetic antidotes were prescribed to ensure that priests successfully resisted the temptations of the flesh: they should 'avoid the society of women, shun idleness, lacerate the flesh by fasting and vigils, keep the outward senses, especially sight and hearing, from things forbidden'.[50]

The concession argument left Henry unimpressed as well. His letter began with Matthew 19 – those who have made eunuchs of themselves for the kingdom of heaven's sake. This was Henry's foundation text. Then he followed it up with a barrage of quotes from the fathers extolling the virtues of celibacy, and threatening dire consequences for those who broke their vows. He cleverly evaded the charge that prohibiting marriage is condemned in Scripture. There was no prohibition, he insisted, because the call was only for those 'able to receive it', and they have God's promise that He will not suffer them to be tempted more severely than they can bear; indeed God will be with them to help them overcome. No one was compelled to be a priest, therefore no one was forbidden to marry. His letter concluded with an unmistakable thrust at his old sparring partner Martin Luther. He appreciated the concern of the German princes about the scandals of the celibate clergy; but instead of

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[49] C. Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer* (Westport, Connecticut, 1975), pp.129-30, 314-15; Brecht 3, pp.235-36.

solving the problem by allowing priests to marry, he ventured, would it not have been preferable to follow the example of the ancients, and debar from the priesthood all those who could not keep their vows? (So Luther should put away his wife or be defrocked!). Quickly and diplomatically Henry added that he did not doubt the sincerity of the German princes.[51]

But whereas the medieval church had established clerical celibacy as a church law, Henry would soon be making it a *divine* law. Henry's logic was quite simple: he thought that a celibate clergy had a scriptural warrant, from Matthew 19 and also 1 Corinthians 7. This was the traditional view, though no one had yet taken it as far as Henry. The following section will argue that these passages do *not* contain any mandate for priestly celibacy at all. More to the point, it will also argue that because the Lutherans showed an unusual respect for this tradition, without realising it they actually reinforced Henry's 'divine law' theory. The texts will be treated from a sixteenth century standpoint, when the Old Testament and the New were accepted as factual, including the first chapters of Genesis, and when St. Paul was presumed to be the author of Ephesians, Timothy and Titus as well as Corinthians.

Matthew 19[52]

The custom was to take Jesus' words about those who 'made eunuchs of themselves for the sake of the kingdom of heaven' as a call for a celibate clergy. The first problem with this is that the 'kingdom of heaven' is not the same thing as the priesthood. The kingdom of heaven belongs to all believers including women and children, as the next verses prove (Jesus receiving little

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[50] *Confutation*, Article 23: *CR* 27, cols.136-45.
[51] Burnet 4, pp.384-91; 1 Timothy 4.3; Matthew 19.11; 1 Corinthians 10.13.

children, for 'of such is the kingdom of heaven').[53] Neither women nor children were eligible for the medieval or Tudor priesthood, so whatever this strange verse means (and practically nobody took it literally) it seems forced to take it as a divine command for a male celibate priesthood.

Besides, the words have been wrested from their context. The subject of the passage is the sanctity of marriage, and the life-long responsibility of each partner to his or her vows. Why, therefore, should Jesus commend celibacy as something superior, especially when He had previously named Peter – a married man – as the first among His elect twelve apostles, and given him the keys to the kingdom of heaven? If celibacy was a superior moral virtue, why such distinction for a married man? Further, if this was a call to celibacy, why did the apostles – the founders of the Christian church – take not the slightest notice of it and get married themselves? And if there is such a thing as a gift of celibacy, why is nothing said about it in passages on spiritual gifts?[54]

Setting the passage in its historical context rather than taking isolated verses at random, the narrative runs as follows. Replying to a question from the Pharisees on divorce, Jesus upheld marriage as God's ordinance given in Eden, and set aside the Mosaic authority for divorce, which was only temporary, and 'because of hardness of heart'.[55] Now that the kingdom of heaven has come (the coming of Jesus the promised Messiah) marriage

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[52] The full section is Matthew, 19.3-12.
[53] Ibid, verses 13-15.
[54] For Peter's and the other apostles' marriages, see Matthew 8.14; 1 Corinthians 9.5; for Peter's pre-eminence and the keys, Matthew 10.2; 16.18-19; passages on spiritual gifts are Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12.
[55] Genesis 1.26-27; 2.20-25; Deuteronomy 24.1-2.

would be for life, as it was originally meant to be. As well as divorce, these words also put an end to polygamy, long since customary among the Jews.

The disciples seemed unhappy with the new teaching (and probably the prospect of being bound to one woman for the rest of their lives, something they had not bargained for when they first became followers of Jesus.) If this is how things have to be, they said, 'it is not good to marry'. 'Not all can receive this saying', replied Jesus, 'except those to whom it has been given'.

The question now is: what 'saying' was He referring to? The traditional view is that He was approving the disciples' words ('it is not good to marry'). But that is highly unlikely, because the disciples were (unintentionally no doubt) contradicting Genesis – that 'it is not good for man to be *alone*' – and this was very Scripture that Jesus was upholding. Besides, having just taught the true meaning of marriage from Scripture, it would be scarcely sense to suddenly announce the superiority of celibacy – something hitherto unheard of – and all because the disciples did not take kindly to Christ's teaching on *Christian* rather than Old Testament marriage. What Jesus meant, surely, was *His* saying – about the lifelong fidelity in marriage demanded in the kingdom of heaven. This is the gift that not all can receive. Even the Jews under the Law – the elect nation from whom the Messiah would come – could not receive it; hence the provision for divorce. The exceptions were 'those to whom it has been given' – the same expression that is used elsewhere of the disciples.[56]

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[56] Eg. Matthew 13.11, Greek: οις δεδοται.

Now comes the contentious verse: 'For there are eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men, *and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.* He that is able to receive it, let him receive it'. Taken in isolation this may indeed sound like a call to celibacy, but that does not fit the context, and another solution is possible. To figuratively eunuch oneself is a painful, difficult act wholly contrary to nature; and lifelong fidelity in marriage – never even to desire another – is exactly that, especially in a society where polygamy and fairly easy divorce have long been customary. Suddenly an unheard of degree of sexual restraint and self-control was required, and only those 'to whom it has been given' – namely the baptised disciples in the kingdom of heaven – were capable of it. In the Sermon on the Mount there is similar vivid and figurative language to emphasise the sanctity of marriage as a divine ordinance, and the seriousness of breaking the marriage bond.[57]

Whether this 'revisionist' interpretation would have been accepted is debatable, but at least the traditional view is far from certain and could have been challenged. The same is even truer of the next text.

1 Corinthians 7

V1. 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman', begins St. Paul, sounding like the disciples ('it is not good to marry'). The same point made above applies here: if meant as a universal truth the verse contradicts God's word in Genesis on which Jesus based His teaching in Matthew 19.[58] For good

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[57] Matthew 5.27-32.
[58] Genesis 2.18; Matthew 19.4-6 – see pp.91-93 above.

measure Paul was contradicting himself as well, because in his epistle to Timothy he wished that the young women should marry, bear children and guide the house – an unlikely outcome if no man ever touched a woman and everyone stayed celibate.[59]

Again the difficulty might be resolved by noting the context. Paul was replying to a letter of the Corinthians to him (verse 1). As that letter has not been preserved we have to guess its contents from Paul's reply. Maybe the Corinthians had suggested that men and women should live apart in *their* letter. More likely Paul had in mind the situation at Corinth specifically, and was not making a comprehensive statement of doctrine.

V2: 'On account of the fornication, let every man have his own wife'. On this verse the Lutheran concession argument was based. However, the original institution of marriage on the seventh day of creation had nothing to do with fornication; it was a type of Christ and the church, not an antidote to sin, which before the fall was impossible.[60] Also, the rigorous requirements of a Christian marriage – a life-long commitment between one man, one woman and no other – are far more like to increase the risk of temptation than reduce it. Had Paul wanted a remedy for infidelity, then bringing back divorce and polygamy would have been more effective. So this verse, like the one before it, may have been intended more for Corinth specifically, and particularly the immoral goings on described in chapter 5, than for the church as a whole. Perhaps someone had suggested that because of all the scandals in the church, men and women, even those who were married, should live as if they

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[59] 1 Timothy 5.4.
[60] Genesis 2.22-24; Matthew 19.4-6; Ephesians 5.31-32.

were celibate. If so, Paul's reply was a clear 'no', as the next verses (4-5) show.

Later in the chapter Paul said that 'I wish that all men to be even as I myself', adding that it was 'good for the unmarried and the widows' to remain that way.[61] Thus an apostolic blessing for celibacy was assumed, particularly for the clergy. But in that case the clergy should admit women (widows) into it. The same applies to the following verses, enthusiastically quoted in the *Confutation* and by Henry to support clerical celibacy: 'He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, and how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife'. Unfortunately this only highlights the danger of plucking Bible verses out of context and applying them to whatever takes the fancy, because the very next ones says the same thing about the married and unmarried woman.[62] So if Henry (and Rome) were going to use this text for a celibate priesthood, then they should have been ordaining women as well (devout spinsters only of course).

Determined to confront the consensus on 1 Corinthians 7, Luther stubbornly refused to accept that it proved Paul's celibacy. He was adamant that Paul was a widower.[63] Be that as it may, this chapter is certainly not about the priesthood. Nowhere did Paul say that it was *morally* good or better to remain unmarried, or that the unmarried were more qualified to be priests. Celibacy was 'good' or 'better' only in the sense that unmarried people have fewer cares and responsibilities, while the married shall have 'trouble in the flesh'. Paul wanted the Corinthians to be 'without care'. The single state might

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[61] 1 Corinthians 7.7-8.
[62] Verses 32-34.

be preferable 'on account of the present distress', but not for the sake of a more virtuous clergy.[64] As there was no systematic state persecution of Christians when Paul wrote to Corinth in the late AD50s, the 'present distress', like the rest of what he has said so far, could be a reference to local troubles. Alternatively Paul may have counselled against setting up marriage ties because of his expectation of the imminent Second Coming.[65]

Whatever the explanation, the real point is that neither here, nor in Matthew 19, nor anywhere in the New Testament is there a completely unambiguous command for a celibate priesthood. Not only that, a text specifically endorsing married clergy does exist, in the epistle to Timothy.

<u>1 Timothy 3</u>

'It is necessary therefore that an overseer (or bishop) be unblameable, husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, hospitable, apt to teach; not given to much wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; governing his own house well, having children in subjection with all gravity (for if someone does not know how to govern his own house, how shall he take care of the house of God.....'

Substantially the same is found in the epistle to Titus.[66]

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[63] *LW* 28, pp.21-24.
[64] Verses 26, 28, 32.
[65] Verses 29-31.
[66] 1 Timothy 3, 1-7; Titus 1.5-9.

Now the words are about as plain as they can be, with no figurative or ambiguous language and no difficulty with the context. Those who aspired to the ministry were expected to have families to care for, else how would Timothy and Titus know whether they could satisfactorily care for the church of God? Although making marriage compulsory may be going beyond the writer's intention, it was plainly much more than a useful optional extra, otherwise the same would apply to the rest of the list, and Timothy could have ordained men who drank too much, who were not especially apt to teach, and who coveted their parishioners' goods.

But this was not how the disputants in the sixteenth century took it. The Catholics and Henry admitted that priests were married in the early days of the church, but they claimed that these words applied to priests who had married before their conversion, so that they should not break their marriage vows. Lutherans used this text to show that priests in the early church were married because marriage was God's provision for all those who were unsuitable for celibacy. They could have used it more forcefully, however. Paul said nothing about marriage for the sake of vows or concessions; married priests were required because being head of the house was an invaluable preparation for looking after a congregation. Take these verses in their normal sense, and anyone 'suitable for celibacy' is not an ideal candidate for the priesthood.

The belief that celibates occupied a higher moral stratosphere than married people was part of a long tradition in the church, dating back to the days of the fathers. However, its Scriptural foundations were somewhat shaky. It drew on a questionable reading of Matthew 19, and a clearly forced

reading of 1 Corinthians 7. There was also the view that apostle John remained unmarried, even though the Scriptural evidence suggests otherwise. 'Do we not have the right to take a sister as wife, like Cephas and the other apostles?' Paul asked the Corinthians – and John was one of those other apostles.[67] Had John been celibate, and if celibacy really was so praiseworthy, it is surely strange that Paul failed to mention that there was at least one other celibate apostle besides himself (if indeed he was).

Whatever the case of Paul and John, celibacy was a 'Catholic' tradition from which the Lutherans had not entirely broken free. Consequently they were inhibited in making their case. From *sola Scriptura* (1 Timothy 3) they could have argued that priests *ought* to be married, to set an example to others and prove that they could care for souls in their charge. The weaknesses in the traditional interpretation of Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7 could have been exposed easily. The Ephesian epistle (also presumed to be Paul's) could have been enlisted as well: there marriage is called a type of Christ and the church, and surely it is a strange state of affairs when a layman can be a type of Christ while a priest cannot.[68] In short, the Scriptural ammunition was available for the Lutherans to go for the Catholic jugular. If additional help were needed, the example of the apostles, especially St. Peter, would have supported a more radical approach.

It might not have convinced Henry, but it could have forced him onto the defensive. The excommunicate king could hardly invoke a papal decree for his celibate clergy, so he had to have a solid Scriptural base, preferably one confirmed by the fathers. No other foundation would do, because none

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[67] 1 Corinthians 9.6.
[68] Ephesians 5.31-32.

other was available to him. Without such authority, Henry had no alternative but to let his priests marry. So when the Lutherans, the champions of *sola Scriptura*, accepted the traditional view of Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7, they were unwittingly strengthening Henry's conviction that a divine command for celibacy existed in Holy Writ.

One reason why Henry appeared to retreat somewhat on the propitiatory sacrifice of the mass was the evidence of plain Scripture texts, such as Christ being offered once and for all at Calvary. When confronted by clear verses of Scripture, Henry felt compelled to react somehow, even to the point of trying to redefine the doctrine of sacrifice. But on priestly celibacy the Lutherans never put him under any real pressure to do this. What they needed was a ringing endorsement from Scripture for married clergy, no less definitive than Christ's once and for all sacrifice on the cross. That is exactly what the passage in Timothy provides, but concession argument robs the words of much of their force.

The Lutheran stance on marriage may have been part of the softly-softly approach of the Augsburg Confession. The supposed virtue of celibacy was not the only traditional doctrine left untouched – they never doubted the perpetual virginity of Mary, for example. A desire to avoid needlessly antagonising their opponents, particularly the emperor Charles V and other established civil powers, and to live in peace with all men as far as they were able, were features of the Lutherans and especially Melanchthon at Augsburg. They could never accept clerical celibacy, but they seemed reluctant to attack traditional views too violently, possibly because marriage had no direct effect on salvation.

This conciliatory attitude was carried forward into the English negotiations. Article 14 of the Wittenberg Articles of 1536 on the marriage of priests opened slightly incongruously with enthusiastic praise of virginity as a 'good work and beneficial for offering constant attention to studies and meditation to prayer, and to ecclesiastical offices'. Then, as 'domestic concerns hinder the married person', it was 'advantageous to choose and have in the churches ministers who are unmarried'.[69] Obviously this was a sweetener for Henry, whose strong views were well known. It did not work of course, because kow-towing to despots never does work; invariably it gets mistaken for weakness, as happened here.

Summary

To summarise, therefore, this was how things stood at the end of the 1538 discussions. Henry had replied to the Germans' letter, and posed three questions. First, why did communion in both kinds matter so much when communion in one, according to Henry, had Scriptural warrant, and in any case the whole Christ was present under either? Second, what did the Lutherans have to say about Henry's idea of keeping the private mass for devotional reasons, and his redefinition of the 'sacrifice' issue? Then considering how the Lutherans had argued the case for married clergy, the third question was almost inevitable: given the superiority of celibacy (widely presumed, and unchallenged by the Lutherans), given God's promise to help priests overcome temptation, why should they need the 'concession' of marriage? Not unnaturally, Henry looked forward to some answers, though he

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[69] N. Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans* (St. Louis, 1965), pp.278-280.

accepted that the German delegation would welcome a return home after their three-month stay in England.

A Parting Shot

Meanwhile the English Reformers, though slightly sidelined by Henry's reliance on Tunstall in August 1538, were not entirely inactive. Progress had ground to a halt on the disputed points, but there was another front on which they could strike. Popish shrines were an especially tempting target.

Back in June Latimer had written to Cromwell trusting him to 'bestow our great Sybil to some good purpose' – Sybil being the image of our Lady in Latimer's Worcester. He asked the same for 'her old sister at Walsingham', and other idolatrous sisters at Ipswich, Doncaster and Penrice in Glamorgan.[70] On the 14th of July the Walsingham image was carted off to Lambeth, along with 'gold and silver things as were in the chapel'. 'What shall become of her is not determined', wrote John Husee to Lord Lisle in Calais, though he probably had a good idea.[71] But Cromwell was no crude iconoclast, and he waited his moment. On the 18th of August he received a letter from Cranmer updating him on the progress of the talks with the Germans. The visitors had requested that 'we may entreat of the abuses' (presumably communion in one kind, private masses and clerical celibacy), and Cranmer promised he would do so. Then strangely changing the subject, Cranmer confided that Becket's blood in Canterbury cathedral might be 'but a feigned thing'. It seems that the archbishop was suggesting something here, because Cromwell surely needed no one to tell him that Becket's relics were fakes.

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[70] H. Latimer, *Sermons and Remains*, ed. G.E. Corrie (PS, 1845), p.395.
[71] *LP* 13 (1) 1376, 1407.

Five days later he received another letter from Cranmer, and the news was not good. The bishops had stalled on the question of abuses because the king planned to write to the Germans himself (actually he wrote that very day.) Cranmer suspected that the Catholic bishops were trying to break the Anglo-Lutheran concord.[72]

Then on the 31st one Madame de Montreuil, a possible future queen for Henry, visited Becket's shrine at Canterbury as part of her tour of England. She was probably one of the last who did. On about the 5th of September Cromwell hastily added an attack on the cult of the saints, and Becket's feasts in particular, to the Royal Injunctions he had already drafted.[73] Within days Becket's shrine – that symbol of papal authority in England – was utterly destroyed. About the same time the offending images from Walsingham and elsewhere were burned at Chelsea. Almost certainly Cromwell had organised the whole thing, though he could never have carried it through in such dramatic fashion without Henry's consent. Cromwell's concentrated but limited iconoclasm seems to have been largely designed for the benefit of his German guests, in the hope that the Anglo-Lutheran alliance could be kept alive after the failure to agree on the disputed points that summer. It achieved some success at least. When the Germans returned home in October they brought with them 'good hope of amending the churches', so Melanchthon reported to Vitus Theodorus. Superstitious pilgrimages are abolished, and monuments of Becket at Canterbury, and others at Walsingham and elsewhere, are overthrown, continued Melanchthon approvingly.[74] So whatever problems remained with Henry on private masses and married

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[72] Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, pp.377-79.
[73] D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven & London, 1996), pp.226-27.

priests, the Germans could rest assured that he was nonetheless a sworn enemy of the pope in Rome.

The King Awaits

The Anglo-Lutheran negotiations of 1538 were conducted in a cordial and positive manner. After the Germans left Henry wrote to John Frederick in October praising their erudition and Christian piety, and feeling assured of sound results. As the subjects discussed concerned the 'glory of Christ and the discipline of religion', they required 'mature consideration', and Henry hoped that the Elector would send Melanchthon and others (unnamed) to settle the matter.[75] Cromwell was also anxious to keep contacts with Lutherans open, and continued to pursue the possibility of a royal marriage to Anne of Cleves. Perhaps to the disquiet of the Catholic party, Henry was favourable. Anne was a duchess, a higher rank than any potential wife in the Schmalkaldic League.[76] Though her brother, the Duke of Cleves, was not the most strictly orthodox Lutheran, his family's relation by marriage to the Elector of Saxony would ensure that the Lutheran connection was kept alive in spite of the setback for Lutheranism in England. We now know that the marriage was a failure, but in 1539 it was a sensible idea that went ahead with Henry's approval. The closing months of 1538 also saw the purging of leading 'traditionalists' (suspected Papists) in England, notably from the Pole and Courtenay families. Reginald Pole's younger brother was arrested in August,

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[74] *CR* 3, col.602; *LP* 13 (2) 741.
[75] *LP* 13 (2) 497.
[76] R. McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden, 1531-1547: Faction, Foreign Policy & the English Reformation' (London School of Economics Ph.D, 1992), p.310.

then his elder brother and the Courtenays in November. Trials and executions followed.[77] All in all, this was hardly a period of triumph for 'traditionalists'.

Naturally Anglo-German relations were not taking place in a European vacuum. The peace treaty agreed in June 1538 between Charles V and Francis of France first ignored and then concerned Henry, who was ever alert to the danger of isolation in Europe. In December the pope was preparing to promulgate the bull of excommunication, which would have released Henry's subjects from their duty of loyalty to their king, and given at least tacit support to rebellion. The papacy longed to see Henry conquered and England restored to the fold under a new, more obedient prince, and in the spring of 1539 parts of the country were virtually on a war-footing. But perhaps the likelihood of an invasion was never as serious as some had feared (or hoped). In March and April king Francis, instead of planning for a crusade against Henry, sent him an ambassador and then a cordial letter. For his part Charles had religious divisions in his own empire as well as Turks threatening it from the outside, and consequently little appetite for another war. By summer the danger to England had passed, and not entirely because of the Six Articles. Besides, as seasoned observers must have suspected, the Franco-Imperial accord did not last very long.[78]

Henry continued to hope for a major Lutheran delegation under Melanchthon's leadership, and was encouraged by Melanchthon's letter in March 1539 commending the king's zeal for the Christian religion, and hoping

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[77] On the 'Exeter conspiracy', see G.R.Elton, *Reform and Reformation* (London, 1977), pp.279-81; McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', pp.238-42.
[78] *CSP, Span.* 6 (1) p.97; *LP* 14 (1) 36; J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London, 1968), pp.360-62; R. Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron, The Reign of Francis 1* (Cambridge, 1994), pp.386-389.

for a general consent among all churches which rejected the papacy.[79] In April he wrote again, urging Henry to complete the work of reformation which he had begun, and rid the church of all abuses. He praised Henry for casting off the 'tyranny of Rome', but sorrowed that some (no names, but presumably Gardiner, Tunstall and their allies) wished to retain Roman abuses. This carried with it the danger that the abuses would serve as an abiding memory of the power of Rome, to which people may be inclined to return. He was particularly disturbed about the 'prohibition of marriage', noting that priests were once married in both Germany and England, and he described the outbreak of civil war in Germany following Rome's decree of celibacy. He closed by urging Henry to remove all impious rites and laws, like godly Hezekiah and other pious kings.[80] However, there was still no considered answer to the specific points made in Henry's letter of August 1538.

About this time some less welcome news reached England regarding a possible concord between Charles V and the Lutheran princes at the diet of Frankfurt. Among other things the Schmalkaldic League had agreed not to admit any new members for eighteen months, which meant that England could not join the League even if Henry were to accept the entire Augsburg Confession. Henry was concerned that such a rapport between Charles and the Lutherans could leave England vulnerable and without allies, because he never entirely trusted King Francis. Cromwell shared his king's unease, and became worried about the League's treatment of Henry, fearing that the Electors were losing interest in England.[81] The Germans had not forgotten England completely, however, and on the 23rd of April another delegation

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[79] *CR* 3, cols.673-74.
[80] *CR* 3, cols.681-85.

arrived on these shores, but minus Melanchthon. It was led instead by Franz Burchard and Ludwig von Baumbach, a Hessian diplomat. Henry hardly tried to conceal his displeasure. The Germans explained that the Frankfurt Interim did not rule out a mutually beneficent pact if either England or the League was attacked, but this was about the only agreeable aspect of the visit. A letter from John Frederick assured the king of his goodwill, but queried why yet another delegation was needed when the Germans' views were by now sufficiently known from their confessions and previous discussions.[82] The prospects for the Reformation cause in England, now decidedly gloomy, were made even worse by Cromwell's illness, which confined him to bed. In an effort to salvage something he wrote to Henry from his sickbed, trying to assure the king that the Germans still felt warmly for him, but were disappointed with the lack of progress, and especially his hard line on clerical celibacy. He quoted Melanchthon on the subject, knowing the king's regard for him. He also reminded Henry that some nuns discharged from converts had been given permission to marry, thereby hoping he could make Henry relent on celibacy and vows.[83] Unfortunately for Cromwell his illness kept him away from court while other more traditional men were able to speak to the king face to face and use their influence on him. However, even a fit Cromwell could not disguise the fact that the Germans had turned noticeably chilly towards Henry. At one stage they even announced that discussions on religion should be ended. It was shortly after this that Henry decided to proceed with legislation on six theological issues, including the disputed points, and drafts were sent to parliament.

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[81] *LP* 14 (1) 580, 703, 915.
[82] *LP* 14 (1) 698.

Because Rory McEntegart has already traced the events of October 1538 to April 1539 in considerable detail, only a summary needs to be given here. McEntegart puts the blame for the breakdown of Anglo-German relations in 1539 fair and square on the Germans for their intransigence and insensitivity to Henry. Tjernagel also wrote apologetically on Henry's behalf.[84] It is easy to see why historians take this view, especially when even Cromwell could feel let down by the Germans. Their 'all or nothing' approach to acceptance of the Augsburg Confession seemed impractical with Henry VIII on the throne and a large Catholic party in the country. As for Henry, he was still waiting for answers to points arising from his August letter, which he felt had entered theological territory not covered in the Augsburg Confessions. But no considered Lutheran response was forthcoming, and now none looked likely either. Henry, who relished theological debate, felt disappointed and slighted.

However, this is not quite the whole story. Whilst German lack of interest (Melanchthon always a notable exception) no doubt influenced the timing of the Six Articles, it cannot be made accountable for the theology of them. That was effectively determined by Henry in the favourable climate of summer 1538. Even though Melanchthon was willing to persevere with Henry, there were others in Germany, notably Luther and John Frederick, who had sized him up by now and sensed – rightly as things turned out – that he was not going to be one of them in religion. No matter how valid Henry felt his arguments were on communion, the mass and celibacy, to the Germans he must have seemed either a bit difficult or a bit dull. For even if it were true that

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[83] R. Merriman, *The Life & Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1902) 2, p.220.

the 'whole Christ' was present under one kind, it still did not alter the fact that the Sacrament was instituted in both. (This is to look at it through Lutheran eyes.) Then the idea that the propitiatory private mass could be beneficial for quasi-evangelical reasons was downright bizarre. Keeping the private mass for *any* reason sent a clear message to Wittenberg that Henry was not going to join them in the faith. Redefining the 'sacrifice' concept while tip toeing around the propitiatory nature of the mass was never going to secure an agreement. On clerical celibacy Henry had a point of sorts, because the Lutheran 'concession argument' was somewhat less than convincing. But making clerical celibacy a divine law – when Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to a married man, and when the early Christian church was built by (mainly) married apostles and had married priests – was no less outlandish than his ideas on the private mass.

Henry enjoyed theological debates, but the Lutherans were in no mood for disputes of this kind. Whatever concessions Melanchthon might have been willing to make at Augsburg, these three points were not among them. Because they went right to the heart of the evangelical faith, they were absolutely non-negotiable.[85] Moreover, at the end of the English visit to Germany in April 1536, Luther had told the Elector that he would support an alliance with England, but not if Henry started to wrangle.[86] So Henry's arguments were never going get much attention from Luther or John Frederick. Besides, as Henry well knew, membership of the Schmalkaldic League depended on acceptance of the Augsburg Confession, and there

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[84] McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', pp.319-352. Tjernagel, *Henry VIII & the Lutherans*, pp.190-210.
[85] See Chapter 1, p.62.
[86] *WA*, Br 7, p.383, lines 12-19; *LW* 50, p.134.

would need to be a strong case if he were to be an exception. That case had not been made. Unfortunate though it was for Cromwell and the English Reformers, the German princes did not have the authority to impose their doctrine on an unwilling Henry. They also had other things to do besides sending one theological delegation after another to England, only to cover much the same ground all over again.

Part 2: The Act and its Aftermath

The Articles

Article One

> 'In the most blessed sacrament of the altar by the strength and efficacy of Christ's mighty word, it being spoken by the priest, is present really, under the form of bread and wine, the natural body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, conceived of the Virgin Mary; and that after the consecration there remaineth no substance of bread or wine, or any other substance, but the substance of Christ, God and man'.[87]

Some legislation on the real presence appeared inevitable in 1538-39, mainly as a counter measure against the spread of Sacramentarianism. Henry had consulted Chancellor Audley for advice on how to 'resist the detestable

[87] Articles taken from A.G. Dickens & D. Carr (eds.), *The Reformation in England To The Accession of Elizabeth 1* (London, 1967), p.110.

heresy against the sacrament of the altar', and Audley proposed an act of parliament.[88]

This article is revealing in another aspect as well. It was pointedly anti-Lutheran (and maybe intended to refute any lingering theories of Wycliff and the Lollards as well.) Seventeen years ago Luther and Henry had exchanged blows over whether the substance of the bread and wine remained after consecration, but now Henry made sure that his view became law in England.[89]

The doctrine is effectively transubstantiation, but the word itself, with its papal connotations, was missing. It was included in the original draft, but later taken out at some stage.[90] This could have been a minor concession to the Reformers, or simply another example of Henry asserting himself in theology. More important is that Henry's agreement in principle with Rome was largely coincidental, because even in the *Assertion* his conviction on 'transubstantiation' was based on his reading of Scripture and the fathers, not the edicts of the papacy.[91] Article one seems intended to be a Patristic statement, not a Papist one.

Article Two

'That Communion in both kinds is not necessary *ad salutem*, by the law of God, to all persons: and that it is to be believed and not doubted of, but that in the flesh, under form of bread, is the very blood, and with the

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[88] *Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. J. A Muller (Cambridge, 1933), pp.369-70.
[89] *Assertion*, pp.17-30. Discussed in Chapter 1, pp.17.
[90] See discussions in G. Redworth, 'A Study in Formulation of Policy: The Genesis and Evolution of the Six Articles', *JEH* 37 (1986), pp.61-64; MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p.252; Ryrie, 'English Evangelicals in the Last Years of Henry VIII', pp.51-52.
[91] *Assertion*, pp.17-30. Discussed in Chapter 1, pp.19, 22-24.

blood, under form of wine, is the very flesh as well apart, as they were both together'

Ever since the 'Babylonian Captivity' the Lutherans claimed that one kind only was downright unscriptural. Henry, however, was confident that he had proved from the Bible that both one kind *and* two kinds have divine sanction, and that he had beaten the *sola Scriptura* Lutherans at their own game.[92] Consequently communing in both kinds should not be forbidden, but neither was it, in the words of the act, necessary for salvation. And because the Lutherans had given no answer to his other point – that the bread contains both Christ's body and blood – he probably felt that he had won that argument too.

Article Three

'Priests after the order of priesthood received, as afore, may not marry by the law of God.'

Henry's 'law of God' for a celibate clergy was based chiefly on Christ's words in St. Matthew 19, already discussed. As Christ is God Incarnate and Scripture is God's word, here is Henry's 'law of God'. The only hope the Lutherans had of dislodging Henry from his position was to prove that the traditional interpretation was wrong or suspect, and that the epistle to Timothy was the standard text to follow. Once they conceded the traditional line, the contest was over.

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[92] See pp.68-69 above.

So Henry was not trying to be more Papist than the pope. In his own eccentric, pedantic style, he probably thought he was being more Scriptural than the Lutherans.

This article also helps in understanding Henry's general religious policy and his relationship with his bishops. Firstly, making celibacy a divine law is the last thing that anyone seeking a religious middle way, or a Catholic-Lutheran compromise, would propose. Secondly, although the Catholic party obviously wanted to keep the clergy celibate, nobody in all Christendom wanted to make it a divine law; so Henry was not being leaned on, or led by others, against his will. This was Henry's article, Henry's act, and Henry's theology.

Article Four

> 'Vows of chastity or widowhood, by man or woman made to God advisedly, ought to be observed by law of God; and that it exempteth them from other liberties of Christian people, which, without that, they might enjoy.'

This article was mainly concerned with vows of celibacy to which most English monks and nuns remained bound, even though by now many of the monasteries had been closed.

The Lutherans rejected vows out of hand. The underlying aim of a vow was to please God by works, whereas the Scripture says that the just shall live by faith. Vows are contrary to the doctrine of justification by faith and also the liberty of the Christian. Vows of chastity are useless and impossible to

keep anyway. Nowhere in Scripture is a life-long vow commanded. (Except, ironically, marriage vows – the very ordinance that monks and nuns renounce!) Occasionally short-term vows are mentioned, usually in the Old Testament. Vows in the New Testament were entirely voluntary and only relevant to Jewish Christians going through a sort of transition period between the old and new covenants, who believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah but were unwilling to let go completely of some long held pious customs. Gentile Christians were never advised to make vows; if anything they were warned away from them.[93]

But whatever the Germans maintained, Henry was on solid Patristic ground. Even Augustine, the church father esteemed most by Protestants, commended vows, and had sharp warnings for those who broke them.[94]

Article Five

'It is meet and necessary that private masses be continued and admitted in this the King's English church and congregation, as whereby good Christian people, ordering themselves accordingly, do receive both godly and goodly consolations and benefits, and it is agreeable to also God's law.'

As the mass was the Roman doctrine that Protestants despised most, it was rather surprising that this article passed through parliament without a single dissenting voice. As Alec Ryrie has noted, the most likely explanation is the

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[93] Taken from '*The Judgement of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows*', 1521, *WA* 8, pp.573-669 (*LW* 44, pp.250-400). Sc. texts: Psalm 50.14, 76.11; Ecclesiastes 5.4; Acts 21.23-26; Colosians 2.20-23. See also AC, Articles 15, 27, Tappert, pp.36-37, 70-80, *BSLK*, pp.69-70, 110-119.

absence of anything overtly offensive, like a sacrifice availing for the departed. Though this could be read into it, it is not specified.[95]

Henry's 'consolations and benefits' were probably those we have already seen from his letter to the Germans last August – confession of sins, prayers for God's mercy, the chance for Christians to offer themselves living sacrifices acceptable to God, resolving to correct their lives and confirm their faith in Christ.[96]

Enough has been said about the private mass already. However, this article sheds more light on Henry's religious policy generally in 1538-39. If Henry really intended to renounce Reform and revert to orthodoxy, then by far the most effective way of doing so was to declare the mass a sacrifice availing for the living and the dead by act of parliament. Apart from a law anathematising justification by faith, no more definite or emphatic rejection of Protestantism was possible. The fact that Henry did no such thing – the fact that he glossed over the real purpose of the private mass – surely proves that he was *not* out to rout the Reformers, or stop all contacts with the Lutherans from that moment on, or radically change his religious direction. This article was hardly the statement of a king zealously committed to upholding medieval orthodoxy against the Lutherans. In his own peculiar way, Henry might have thought he was being reasonable and ecumenical.

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[94] Eg. *PL* 36, cols.967-68; *NPNF* 8, p.358 (11)-359.
[95] Ryrie, 'English Evangelicals in the Last Years of Henry VIII', pp.47-48.
[96] See pp.76-78.

Article Six

'Auricular confession is expedient and necessary to be retained and continued, used and frequented, in the church of God.'

Auricular Confession was never one of the most contentious points between the English and the Germans. Though the Lutherans rejected the Catholic insistence that all sins should be named (else why would the Psalmist pray to be cleansed from secret faults?) they never abolished private confession. Though not technically compulsory, confession was normally required before communion in Lutheran churches.[97] It did not feature in the letters between Henry and the Germans in August 1538, but it was one of the few unresolved issues from the first round of talks held in June that year. The Catholic party was eager for a very traditional line on Confession to be included in the Act. They had over-reached themselves, however, and the story of this last article gives a further clue to understanding Henry's religion.

In the *Assertion* Henry had raged against Luther for denying that confession was proved by Scripture. Henry cited the Psalmists who poured out their hearts before the Lord, and the command in Numbers for the people to confess their sins to the priest, and also the exhortation of St. James to 'confess your sins one to another', which Henry thought referred to sacramental confession, though he acknowledged that there were other views and did not want to force his own. So Confession stood by the 'divine order of God'.[98] Perhaps mindful of this, the Catholic party led by Norfolk and Tunstall

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[97] AC, Article 25, Tappert, p.61.1, *BSLK*, p.97.1; W. David Myers, *Poor, Sinning Folk: Confession and Conscience in Counter- Reformation Germany* (Ithaca & London, 1996), p.67-69. Quote from Psalm 19.12.
[98] *Assertion*, pp.67-69. Psalm 61; Numbers 5.7; James 5.16.

wanted Auricular Confession 'by divine law'. The Reformers naturally objected, and Henry, to the obvious chagrin of the traditionalists, agreed. A seriously miffed Tunstall wrote to Henry to try and persuade him to reconsider.

But Henry had changed in 1539. Despite all Tunstall's efforts, confession was no longer a command of God. The passage in James, Henry now felt, 'seemeth better to make for extreme unction'. The Reformers had done their homework, and had managed to convince Henry that the church fathers did not insist on confession by law of God after all. When replying to Tunstall Henry quoted, among others, Cyprian, and though Cyprian commended confession, 'he knowledgeth no bond', concluded Henry. 'So why allege you', he demanded of Tunstall, 'that we should be bound by God's law thereto'.[99] Hence the wording of the Act – 'expedient, necessary' – but not quite divine law.

Exactly when Henry changed his ground is not clear. In the Ten Articles of 1536 (number three on Penance) absolution, not confession, was described as of divine institution, though it could be argued that the one implied the other.[100] The relevant point is that king Henry was not entirely inflexible on theology; but it took the holy fathers, not the Lutherans, and not even his own bishops, to shift him.

So Henry's policy was clear: English church doctrine would conform to the teachings of the fathers. This story has a twist, however, because whether Henry properly understood Cyprian is another matter.

Tunstall had quoted Cyprian as follows:

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[99] Burnet 4, pp.400-404 (Tunstall's letter); pp.405-7 (Henry's reply).

Denique quanto et fide maiore et timore meliore sunt qui, quamvis nullo sacrificii aut libelli facinore constricti, quoniam tamen de hoc vel cogitaverunt, hoc ipsu aput sacerdotes Dei dolenter et simpliciter confitentes exomologesin conscientiae faciunt ..... [101]

In his reply, Henry translated but paraphrased Cyprian:

> 'How much be they then higher in faith, and better in fear of God, which though they be not bound by any deed of sacrifice, or book, yet be they content sorrowfully to confess them to the priest'.

So Henry concluded: 'Since he knowledgeth no bond in us by neither fact of sacrifice or libel, why allege you (though he praise auricular confession) that we should be bound by God's law thereto?[102]

But Henry's translation may too brief to be accurate. A more faithful one is given by Maurice Bévenot:

> 'Accordingly, how much greater is the faith and more salutary the fear of those who, though they have *committed no crime* of sacrifice or certificate, *yet because they have merely thought of doing so,* confess

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[100] *English Historical Documents* 5, 1485-1558, ed. C.H. Williams (London, 1953), p.799. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.
[101] Burnet 4, p.403; Cyprian, *De lapsis*, 28: *PL* 4, col.503.
[102] Burnet 4, p.407.

even this to the priests of God simply and contritely, and manifest their conscience to them'. (Emphasis mine.)[103]

Henry has translated 'constringo' into 'bound', which would normally be acceptable. But Bévenot's rendering ('committed no crime'), though interpretative perhaps, takes the context into account.

According to Henry, Cyprian's meaning was that confession is not compulsory, but those who do confess are better than those who don't. But what Cyprian really meant was that those who confess a wrong *thought* to the priest, even though they have not actually done the deed, should be praised for their faith and godly fear.

The context makes this clearer. In the previous section (27), Cyprian said that God judges words and thoughts, not just the things we do.[104] Then in section 29 Cyprian urged each one to confess his sin while his confession 'can still be *heard*' (dum admitti confessio eius potest). This is Bévenot's translation again. As before it may be interpretative ('heard' for 'admitto'), but he gets the meaning right, because, as Cyprian continues, 'satisfaction and forgiveness *granted through the priests* are pleasing to God' (emphasis mine).[105]

Although Cyprian could hardly have foreseen the obligatory sacramental confession of the medieval church, he was certainly calling on penitents to confess their sins, and moreover to a priest. It was not something merely commendable. Henry misunderstood, and in so doing gave the

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[103] Cyprian, *De Lapsis and De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate*, text & trans. M. Bévenot (Oxford, 1971), pp.42-3.
[104] Ibid, pp.40-41
[105] Ibid, pp.44-45.

Protestants their token victory. Cranmer might have had something to do with this, because he was involved in the discussions on confession.[106] Tunstall and the Catholic party must have been livid.

Review: Henry the Theologian

The main reason why the act is neither recognisably Papist or Lutheran, I suggest, is that its prime author and Defender of the Faith was carving out his own, independent theological path. The very strangeness of the act marks it out as the work of an amateur – albeit a clever one – following his own agenda and instincts, prepared to overrule his experts at times.

He was motivated by two main factors. First, Luther's taunt of stupidity in theology in his reply to the *Assertion*, though made a generation ago, must have left its mark, and Henry felt a strong desire to prove himself with Lutherans. We have seen how he tried Scripture against them, convinced that he was in the right. There was more polish in the Henry of 1538-39 than the young king and author of the *Assertion*, but no fundamental theological difference on the real presence, communion in one kind, clerical celibacy and vows. On the mass he was more flexible and innovative, trying to get round the 'sacrifice' hurdle, but he still was not prepared to give up the doctrine of sacrifice and offering completely. Only on auricular confession was there any real movement, but what changed him was a re-reading of the fathers, not discussions with the Lutherans. Our 'Defender of the Faith', clearly peeved at being snubbed by the Lutherans, was anxious to justify himself and his own personal, rather peculiar beliefs.

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[106] Burnet 4, p.405.

The second factor was the King's aim to establish his own national church, independent of both Rome and Wittenberg, based on Scripture and the fathers as Henry interpreted them. Not for Henry some vague middle ground; he saw himself as a Christian prince and head of the church like Constantine and Justinian, and he sought to re-establish the doctrine of that age in England.

There can be little doubt that he had a higher veneration for the fathers than any other theological authorities, including his own bishops. A brief review of his letters to the Germans and to Tunstall will make this clear.

On Communion in one kind Henry gave no direct quote, but claimed that Chrysostom, Theophilactus and Augustine agreed that Luke 24 (when Christ, after His resurrection, met the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and broke bread) referred to the Eucharist.[107]

On the private mass (overlooking the preliminary skirmishing on the frequency of masses in early church, and concentrating on the 'sacrifice' issue) Henry claimed that Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome and Augustine used the 'sacrifice' term in the same way that he did. (Unusually for him, there are no direct quotes.)[108] It *may* be significant that Gregory the Great, cited three times in the *Assertion*, is missing from the 1538 letter, because Gregory described a distinctly *propitiatory* sacrifice, the subject Henry avoided in 1538.[109]

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[107] Burnet 4, p.375. Actually this point was non-controversial: Melanchthon admitted the Eucharist could be understood here. (See p.63, fn.7) But Henry was building up his argument that communion in one kind had Scriptural warrant.
[108] Burnet 4, p.383.
[109] *Assertion*, pp.45-46. In the *Assertion*, Henry had no doubt about the propitiatory sacrifice of the mass, and he threw in Gregory along with Augustine and Ambrose. However, from my separate analysis (pp.74-79) it is not clear whether they were all using the word in the same way.

On clerical celibacy he quoted mainly from Jerome, Augustine and Cyprian.[110] Replying to Tunstall on Auricular Confession in 1539, Henry quoted Chrysostom, Bede, Origen and Cyprian, though each of these was first quoted by Tunstall to Henry.[111]

Obviously the ancients were Henry's doctrinal authorities, and this can be narrowed down even further. He did not use earlier fathers like Justin and Irenaeus (whether by choice, or whether he did not know their writings, it is impossible to say.) Neither does Gregory's name appear in the letters of 1538-39. So Henry's specific Patristic authorities were those in the 'middle period': Cyprian, Augustine, Jerome, Chrysostom. This is true on *every* issue, not just private masses.

King Henry's *aim*, therefore, was to build a 'Patristic' church, independent of both Rome and Wittenberg, based on the doctrine of the fathers in broadly the Nicean age. However, he did not quite succeed in that aim, for a number of reasons.

He still had a bit more of the 'medieval' in his system than maybe he realised – concomitance, for example. Also on the real presence (effectively transubstantiation), though Henry cited the fathers in the *Assertion*, the language in Article 1 of the Six (the word 'substance' used three times) might betray a medieval way of thinking.[112]

On clerical celibacy he was not entirely faithful to the fathers, because they did not make it a divine law. But he was certainly bolstered by the fathers' evident esteem of celibacy, and like an over-zealous aficionado he took them and Matthew 19 to what he felt was the right conclusion.

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[110] Burnet 4, pp.386-90.
[111] Burnet 4, pp.400-07.

Then, though he was hardly alone in this, Henry could invoke the fathers without allowing for the totally different religious environment of the medieval age. He plucked Cyprian's pastoral call to confess secret sins out of its historical context and used it as a legal definition (and got Cyprian's real meaning wrong in the process). Then trying to replicate the way the fathers called the mass a sacrifice while circumventing the medieval *propitiatory* teaching, might have been an interesting topic for an after dinner discussion, but in negotiations with the Lutherans it was a theological non-starter. Henry seems to have grossly underestimated the huge significance of the propitiatory mass as a Reformation controversy. From the *Assertion* he obviously knew what the propitiatory doctrine was, but this knowledge may have been rather theoretical. He could recite it correctly, and he obviously realised that the Lutherans didn't like it; but he does not seem to have *grasped* the issue.

Also, there is little evidence that Henry understood the inter-connection of different theological subjects. For example, justification by *faith alone* in the promised mercy of God is incompatible with the medieval Eucharistic *sacrifice*, however that word is defined. Also Henry's decision that confession, though good, is not *demanded* by God's law, was just a fine legal distinction in the Reformation context. It was not confession itself that the Lutherans opposed; their point was that naming all sins is downright impossible, partly because original sin still in the believer prevents him seeing that some things

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[112] However, see Darwell Stone's comment in Chapter 1, p.23, fn.23.

really *are* sins. So what really matters is faith *alone* in God's promise of forgiveness, not trying our best to remember as many sins as we can.[113]

So although Henry's aim or religious policy can be discerned, the result was a bit of a theological jumble. However, though the Act of Six Articles is confusing, I believe that confusion is explainable, though not necessarily defendable.

This analysis is not to disregard events on the European scene as described by Glyn Redworth and others.[114] But although European developments may have influenced the timing of the Act, they did not determine the content of it to any significant degree. Sooner or later these six articles, or something very like them, were going to appear on the statute books of England. Henry was keeping a watchful eye on the activities of Francis and Charles, but the man who had defied the pope was not going to take theological orders from anyone. The Royal Supremacy had become a Henrician article of faith. That being said, however, the act did look orthodox enough – just – to defuse any remaining or foreseeable threat from abroad. After June 1539 it was less likely than ever that Charles or Francis would listen to any of Rome's promptings to bring the schismatic king to subjection by embarking on a costly and risky invasion.

The Fallout

The act proscribed harsh penalties for offenders. Those who spoke or wrote contrary to article one would be guilty of heresy and burned. Anyone preaching or teaching against the remaining articles, or who married after a

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[113] 'Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked may in me.....' Ps. 139.23-24. Repentance and justification will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

vow of chastity, would die a felon's death. Anyone otherwise writing or speaking against them, or even holding a contrary opinion, would suffer imprisonment and loss of all property for the first offence, and a felon's death for the second. Marriages of priests and others who have vowed chastity were declared void. Special commissions were to be instituted to enforce the act.[115]

English Reformers reacted in different ways. Latimer and Shaxton resigned as bishops.[116] A distraught Cranmer wished he could flee the country, and only loyalty to Henry constrained him.[117] George Constantine had harsh words for Tunstall, for 'there is no man that hath done so much hurt in this matter as the Bishop of Durham, for he by his stillness, soberness and subtlety worketh more than ten such as Winchester' (Stephen Gardiner). Constantine wished that Gardiner and Tunstall were 'as learned in God's word as they be in the pope's law, and as earnest to set the word forth as they be traditions'; but nothing could be hoped from them except a '*translatio Imperii*, so that they make of the king as it were a pope'. [118] (Constantine was not the only one to detect a more sinister side in Tunstall's calmness, at least from the Protestant point of view: William Tyndale once described him as that 'Saturn that so seldom speaketh, but walketh up and down all day long musing and imagining mischief'.[119])

Cromwell, sensing perhaps that no reformist measure had actually been overturned, reacted pragmatically, and used his position and influence to stall on the setting up of the enforcement commissions laid down in the

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[114] Redworth, 'Genesis and Evolution of the Six Articles', *JEH* 37 (1986), pp.42-67.
[115] Dickens & Car (ed), *The Reformation in England to the Accession of Elizabeth I*, p.111.
[116] A.G.Dickens, *The English Reformation* (2nd edn., London, 1989) p.201.
[117] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p.251
[118] Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall*, p.216; *LP* 14 (2) 400, p.141.

act.[120] He may have gauged the king's mood more accurately than the bishops, because the resulting persecution was not as excessive as might have been feared when the act and its penalties were announced.[121] Nevertheless, the signals that Henry sent out in 1539 were alarming for Reformers at home and abroad.

In Saxony Luther, Jonas, Bugenhagen and Melanchthon made their fears clear in a letter to the Elector John Frederick on the 23rd of October, that despite all the hopes they had placed in him, Henry had little true zeal for God. (The same letter included an entertaining piece of Tudor gossip from an undisclosed source about the bishop of Winchester, now supposed to be immensely powerful in England, who won't let priests marry but led about with him two loose women dressed as men.)[122]

The same day Luther wrote separately to the elector, damning Henry for being fickle and fallen from the gospel. Even Robert Barnes admitted he did not care for true religion. Away with this head and Defender of the Faith! Henry is so arrogant that he thinks God Almighty cannot get along without him. (Even in July that year Luther had told friends that the Schmalkaldic League was well rid of Henry, who was unworthy of Melanchthon's lavish praise of him in the preface to his Loci.)[123]

In Southern Germany, Martin Bucer took a different but slightly contradictory line. Perseverance was required, he urged Landgrave Philip, and the Germans themselves were not blameless. John Frederick should

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[119] W. Tyndale, *Expositions and Notes on Sundry Portions of Holy Scriptures, together with the Practice of Prelates*, ed. H. Walter (PS, 1849), p.337.
[120] *LP* 14 (2) 423; McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', pp.372-73, 377-78, 399-400.
[121] Dickens, *The English Reformation*, p.201; Ryrie, 'English Evangelicals in the Last Years of Henry VIII', pp.35-39.

have let Melanchthon go to England, Myconius and Burkhardt had left England too soon, and the Lutherans lacked courage and vision. The Landgrave was unmoved. Bucer also wrote to Cranmer half reprovingly (as if the act was somehow Cranmer's fault) but encouragingly as well, relieved at least that Henry still wished to be a friend of the League despite the religious differences.[124]

The classic Lutheran response to the act was Philip Melanchthon's letter to Henry dated 1st November 1539. Melanchthon expressed his deep sorrow at the turn of events in England; he avoided all personal invective against the king, but systematically savaged the doctrine of the act, and laid the responsibility for it entirely at the door of the bishops, not the king.

As Roman emperors Adrianus, Verus and Marcus heard the appeals of Christians and lessened the edicts against them, so Melanchthon besought Henry, a Christian prince, to do likewise. He citied examples of princes being misled by wicked advisers, like Darius sending Daniel to the lions, but wise rulers would revoke unjust laws, as Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Ahasuerus and others had done. Melanchthon grieved for the severity of this anti-Christian act; for Latimer, Shaxton and Cranmer who, so he had heard, were detained; and he grieved also that Henry, against his will, had been made a minister of the bishops' impiety. The papacy would rejoice that Henry has taken up arms on its behalf against the Lutherans, many of whom had hoped Henry would champion reform and the true gospel. Though his bishops may seem loyal to him now, really they were part of the Roman system specialising in covering abuses. Take Auricular Confession, for instance. Though it did not enforce

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[122] *LW* 50, pp.192-204.
[123] *LW* 50, pp.204-206; *LW* 54, pp.361-62, no. 4699.

enumeration of sins by divine law, that is how it the people will understand it when they hear it is 'necessary to be retained' – which is exactly what the bishops want. The same applied to private masses. For which 'consolations and benefits' should these masses, unheard of until four hundred years after the apostles, be continued? The bishops did not name them, but they knew right well what they were, namely 'application and merit'. They wanted to retain private masses to sustain the idolatry of the mass as a sacrifice meriting remission of sins and bringing in filthy lucre for the clergy. (Here Melanchthon saw exactly how the act would be used, whatever Henry's intentions were. Believing that Henry had been deceived by unscrupulous bishops, he hoped that he could open the king's eyes.) He was especially scathing about the private mass, that profanation of the Lord's Supper. It is sheer wickedness to say that Christ is offered in the mass, and that this work is a sacrament redeeming the living and the dead. This was not Christ's institution, and is wholly contrary to the gospel. Christ does not want Himself to be offered by sacrificing priests. Private masses are full of idolatry and should be abolished, not retained. The mass is the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, a blasphemy of the Sacraments and detested by God, which has brought in countless scandals and abuses. As for clerical celibacy, the bishops knew full well from the epistle to Timothy that by divine law a priest was allowed to marry. Vows were invariably connected with superstitions, saints, masses, meats, chastity and so on – all of them impious human works instituted by men as true worship of God. The threat of the death penalty for priests who married was especially shocking. Vows of

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[124] *LW* 50, p.195; *OL* 2, pp.526-30.

chastity were a false worship and in any case impossible, as the scandals of the celibate clergy prove. Melanchthon then turned directly to Henry. Rightly you call the pope antichrist, he appealed, yet you defend his laws and superstitions with threats of harsh penalties. This would establish antichrist, not remove him. If there were a papal synod today, these were the articles the pope would enforce. In the past God raised up pious kings like David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Constantine. Would to God Henry were in this elect company and not among the enemies of Christ, contaminated with idolatry, stained with the blood of the pious. Let Henry heed the prayers of godly Christians, not the sophistries of the enemies of Christ; then God will surely reward him greatly, and his name will be extolled among the pious until Christ comes. Christ's church needs princes to defend her against tyranny; this was a worthy office of a king, and a true worship of God.[125]

Not Yet the End

In 1545 Stephen Gardiner gave his own views on Henry's relations with Lutherans. 'I never saw the king's highness of himself had any affection to them, but hath ever wisely weighed and considered the natures of them..... some time of necessity, some time of policy, he hath wisely used them', he wrote.[126] But Gardiner was never the king's favourite either as bishop or confidant, and not as closely involved with the German talks as others. The fact is that Henry was motivated by something deeper than short-term diplomacy, and, though convinced that he was right on the disputed points, he

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[125] *CR* 3, cols.805-819. Reports reaching Wittenberg that Cranmer had been detained were obviously mistaken.
[126] Gardiner, *Letters*, p.162.

did not want to shut the door on further talks with the Lutherans or reverse his German policy entirely.

The demolition of Becket's and other shrines, for example, occurred after Henry's letter to the Germans. Then arrangements for his fourth marriage to Anne of Cleves continued after the act. A portrait of Anne was brought to Henry, and the Duke of Cleves sent an embassy to England to conclude the marriage contract. All was settled on the 6th of October, and plans were soon laid for her arrival in England. Anne travelled from Dusseldorf via Antwerp to Calais, crossed the English Channel to Deal on the 27th of December, and from there made her way to Dover, then Canterbury and Rochester. Henry, showing no signs of last minute misgivings after the Lutherans' hostile response to the Six Articles, waited eagerly for her at Greenwich. Unable to endure the tension any longer, he dashed down to Rochester on impulse to surprise her with gifts before the official reception. The king's disillusionment when he first saw her is well known. It was only to spare Anne the humiliation of sending her home distraught, and the risk of 'driving her brother into the Emperor and the French king's hands', that he 'put his neck in the yoke' and endured the marriage ceremony.[127] But neither this disappointment nor Melanchthon's withering attack on the Six Articles dampened his desire for further talks with the Lutherans on religion. The Germans who accompanied Anne to England later gave their own report of what the king said to them:

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[127] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.368-71.

'He (Henry) has been sufficiently advised by his learned men that ours have gone too far with regard to priestly marriage, communion in both kinds and the private mass. And although his learned men might err, so might ours also err. Indeed, he said, we will see that ours err in many respects: in summary he holds his view to be justified, and desires that he or his be written to on these and other essential articles and our reasoning be demonstrated'.

According to the same report Henry was still seeking a political as well as a religious alliance.[128]

It is scarcely credible that Henry was feigning an interest in religion for purely diplomatic reasons. Had that been the case, he could have accepted the Augsburg Confession and membership of the Schmalkaldic League with it. Or he could have renounced the Lutherans and sued for peace with Catholic Europe including Rome, now that Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn were no longer alive. What has been seen of Henry so far – his *Assertion*, his divorce crisis, the Royal Supremacy, his overtures to the Germans, his close involvement in the 1538-39 talks and the Six Articles – all suggests a king with much more than a peripheral interest in theology.

So how could Henry still want to persevere with the Lutherans? Strange though it may seem, Henry thought that further progress and even a

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[128] McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', pp.401-2. Source, Strassburg delegates report to SL at Schmalkalden, March 1540, PC 3, p.32. (PC = Politische Correspondenz der Stadt Strassburg im Zeitalter der Reformationen.) German, 'Der Konig hab selbst aigner person mit inen geredt, er sei von seinen gelerten sovil, das die unsern in denen puncten die priesteree, die communion sub utraque specie und die privatmessen belangend ze weit gangen. wievol die seinen mochten irren, so mogen aber die unsern auch irren. und sonderlich sag er, wir werden sehen, das wir in vil stucken irren, in summa, er halt sein opinion fur gerecht und beger, man soll ime oder den seinen von disen und andern

formal agreement were still possible, and he was increasingly perplexed when others did not share his view.

If we try to survey the theological scene through Henry's eyes, however, his attitude might not be quite so odd. On the Eucharist, for example, Luther's early hostility towards transubstantiation had softened a little, partly as a result of his conflict with Zwingli. For the Lutherans, transubstantiation was never as serious an error as treating the mass as a sacrifice or denying the cup to the laity. As an explanation of the real presence it was unnecessary and unsatisfactory, but not as bad as the real *absence* of the Sacramentaries. Luther would not greatly trouble himself about what happened to the bread and wine so long as Christ's body and blood were there, and given a choice between the transubstantiation of the Papists and the real absence of Zwingli, he would choose the first.[129] Quite likely the English knew of this, because most of them were well informed about doctrinal controversies on the continent. No deadly missiles were aimed at transubstantiation either in the Augsburg Confession or the *Apology.* In the Smalcald Articles of 1537 it was rejected as a 'sophistical subtlety' – a fairly mild term of polemical abuse by the standards of the time.[130] It hardly featured in the discussions with the English, and was not mentioned once in the Germans' letters to Henry in 1538, or Melanchthon's to the king after the Act.

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notwendigen artikeln schreiben, unsere grund anzaigen'. ..... 'mit disen nicht allain in religion sonder allen auch eusserlichen prophansachen ein verstandnuss ze machen'. (Ibid, p.33.).

[129] 'Da ligt mir nicht viel an, denn wie ich offtmals gnug bekennet habe, sol mirs kein hadder gelten, Es bleybe wein da odder nicht, Mir is gnug, das Christus blut da sey, Es gehe dem wein, wie Gott wil. Und ehe ich mit den Schwermern wolt eytel Wein haben, so wolt ich ehe mit dem Bapst eytel Blut halten'. *WA* 26, p. 462, lines 1-5; *LW* 37, p.317. The passage is a little difficult but a suggested free translation is as follows: It does not matter much to me whether the wine remains there or not. I have made clear often enough that it is not worth a fight. What matters to me is that Christ's blood is there. As regards what happens to the wine, that's God's will. As for me, I'd rather have blood on its own with the pope than wine on its own with the fanatics (Sacramentaries).

In Luther's eyes transubstantiation was wrong but not fatally wrong, and for the time being at least they were prepared to live with it in the hope of making progress on other fronts. Here was one sign that the gap was narrowing.

It was not the only one. The Lutheran attitude to the fathers was another. Replying to the *Assertion*, Luther swore that he would hold fast to the words of Christ against a 'thousand Augustines and Cyprians'; from which it could be inferred (though perhaps not entirely accurately) that he would be glad to sweep away the fathers along with the popes, the councils and nearly everything else.[131] The Augsburg Confession and *Apology* were more deferential, time and again emphasising how this and that doctrine, though contrary to the pope and the scholastics, was nonetheless in accordance with the teaching of the fathers. This difference was more diplomatic than substantial of course; still it would be understandable if Henry believed that the Lutherans had moderated somewhat. This more respectful treatment of the fathers was kept up in talks with the English.

Developments on another subject – ordination – reinforce the point. Though the Lutherans had never insisted as an article of faith that the only sacraments were Baptism and the Eucharist, in the 1520s they had, to all intents and purposes, stopped regarding ordination as such. At Ausgburg, however, Melanchthon allowed that ordination and the laying on of hands *could* be called a sacrament, provided it was understood in relation to the ministry of the Gospel and not the sacrificial priestly system.[132] Now in the

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[130] Smalcald Articles, Part 3, Article 6, Tappert, p.311.5; *BSLK*, p.452.5.
[131] *WA* 10 (2), p.215, lines 5-10.
[132] *Apology*, Article 13, Tappert, p.212.11-12, *BSLK*, pp.293-94.11-12. In the same Article Melanchthon did not condemn calling marriage a sacrament, but said that it must be distinguished from baptism, absolution and the eucharist which, unlike marriage, confer forgiveness and remission of sins. He added that if marriage should be classed as a

section on orders in the Bishops' Book of 1537, although Ordination was still listed as one of the sacraments, the functions of the priest were defined in quite Lutheran-like terms: they were to preach the Word, minister the sacraments, absolve the penitent, feed the flock of Christ, set a good example. Melanchthon might well have approved. Bishops and priests were discussed as if there were no real difference between them, with nothing about an indelible mark. To 'consecrate the blessed body of Christ in the sacrament' was about the only concession to Catholicism, and that a very minor one.[133] This is not to suggest that Henry was on the verge of converting to Luther's universal priesthood, but nonetheless it was one more example of an apparent movement on both sides.

Another early theological flashpoint, now slightly less controversial, was free will. In the 1520s Henry had accused Luther of 'placing the inevitable cause of evils on the only good God' by denying free will. Nor was Henry alone, because Tunstall and others had made the same charge.[134] It was not true, but widely believed. As if to put the record straight the Augsburg Confession sought to clarify the Lutheran position. Quoting Augustine it agreed that by freewill a man may lead an outwardly decent life, avoiding obvious crimes like theft and murder; but only the work of God's Spirit in the heart was able to make us spiritually righteous and justified in the sight of God. The cause of sin was laid firmly at the door of the devil and ungodly

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sacrament because it is a divine ordinance with a divine command, then to be consistent so should a lot of other things, like prayer, almsgiving. Tappert, p.213.14-17; *BSLK*, p.294.14-17.

[133] Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, pp.96-97.

[134] *LP* 4 (1) 40. Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall*, pp.122-23.

men. This was accepted by the *Confutation.*[135] Though there was still room for discussion and disagreement about the precise role of the human will in salvation, this was at least enough to assure Henry and others that Lutherans were not blaming God for the evil in the world.

So Henry's eagerness for further dialogue with the Lutherans is not totally inexplicable, and he had good reason to believe that he had played his part in this steady if rather slow rapprochement. By 1538 most monasteries were closed, the cult of images and the saints drastically refined, relics and pilgrimages effectively consigned to the past, while purgatory, though not abolished, had been pushed into the background. More important, men like Latimer and Barnes were preaching justification by faith freely and openly. All this had raised hopes in Wittenberg, and there was more to come. In 1540, a year after the Six Articles, even the seven sacraments were coming under royal scrutiny. Henry was probing his bishops, asking hitherto unthinkable questions, like 'how many sacraments there be by the ancient authors', and whether there were seven only or not in the writings of the fathers.[136] This does not suggest a man wanting to end all further religious reform.

Further, Henry surely knew that he could make concessions in future negotiations. As he and his Catholic bishops knew well enough (and as the current practice in the Roman Catholic Church has shown) communion in both kinds was so well attested from Scripture and the ancient church that it could safely be made the norm without fatally undermining the traditional faith. Stephen Gardiner, one of Henry's leading orthodox men, never opposed it on

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[135] AC, Articles 18-19, Tappert, pp.39-41, *BSLK*, pp.73-75; *Confutation*, Articles 18-19: *CR* 27, cols.118-21. However, Catholics and Lutherans were not agreed on free will, as Melanchthon noted in the *Apology*, Tappert, pp.224-26, *BSLK*, pp.311-13.

principle.[137] Here Henry could give ground, if Wittenberg reciprocated on another point, perhaps. And as Henry had gone further on clerical celibacy than the teaching of the fathers required, there was some room for manoeuvre here too.

Actually there was no fundamental difference between Lutheranism in the 1520s and 1530s.[138] We, however, have to try and understand how things might have appeared to Henry, and to him there were clear signs of a slow but steady coming together, and consequently every reason to carry on talking.

But there was another reason why Henry was not finished with the Lutherans yet, and it was more important than any mentioned so far.

We have seen Henry in January 1540 defending his view on communion, private masses and celibacy to the Cleves delegation, desiring that theological talks be resumed.[139] Henry was convinced that it was worth trying again, because 'we are of one opinion in the principal matters of faith' – '*justification and the most essential points*'.[140]

It is astonishing that Henry could imagine that these disputed points were *not* essential. It is even more astonishing to hear that he and the Lutherans were now agreed on justification. Only eight months after he said this, Robert Barnes, the leading English Lutheran, was burned as a heretic –

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[136] Cranmer, *Misc Writings*, pp.115-117. The Seven Sacraments were of course retained in the King's Book (Lacey, pp.41-82).
[137] Redworth, *Life of Stephen Gardiner*, p.265; Foxe 6, p.90; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (London, 1995), p.314.1390.
[138] To be discussed further in Chapter 3.
[139] See pp.129-30.
[140] Emphasis mine. 'Wir seien im haupthandl in der rechten glaubenssachen der justification und den notwendigen puncten ains'. See McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', p.401, from the Strassburg delegates' report to the Schmalkaldic League, March 1540 PC 3, p.33. (PC = Politische Correspondenz der Stadt Strassburg im Zeitalter der Reformationen.)

for preaching justification by faith alone – and Henry's Lutheran policy was finished.[141] Putting it diplomatically, on this crucial doctrine Dominicus Henricus had been labouring under a certain misapprehension. How this happened is the subject to be investigated next.

[141] Details in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3: Henry VIII & Justification by Faith

Introduction

This chapter will examine the controversies over justification, faith and good works by comparing the Lutheran, Roman and Henrician confessional statements, and how they progressed. It will look for any signs – real or imagined – of compromise or a coming together. Justification was not one of the 'disputed' points in the 1538 Anglo-Lutheran discussions, so any agreement between the parties would have been reached sometime during the mid-1530s. The key document, I believe, is the 1535 edition of Philip Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*, dedicated to Henry VIII and sent to him via Cromwell.[1]

The chapter also has a concurrent theme, namely a study the Ten Articles of 1536, the only piece of legislation in the 1530s to define justification for the English church. It will argue that Thomas Cromwell, realising that Henry was not ready to accept the entire Augsburg Confession, was seeking to import as much Lutheranism into England as he safely could, and framed the Ten Articles accordingly.

Article 5 of the Ten enigmatically declared that justification was attained by 'contrition and faith joined with charity after such sort and manner as we before mentioned and declared'.[2] This must refer to an earlier article – namely number 3, on the 'Sacrament of Penance', so Penance must be looked at first by way of background.

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[1] *LP* 9.226.

Penance & Repentance

The Augsburg Confession identified two parts to repentance – first contrition, then faith in the gospel promise of forgiveness. Good works, the fruits of repentance, then follow. All ideas that we merit grace through satisfactions of our own were rejected.[3]

The Roman Catholic *Confutation* insisted on three parts, namely contrition, confession and satisfaction; thus the ancient doctors and councils taught.[4] Giving faith a prominent role all of its own was superfluous 'since it is known to all that faith precedes repentance because unless one believes he will not repent.' The Lutherans were further reprimanded for 'making light of pontifical satisfactions'. John the Baptist commanded the people to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Leo the Great, Ambrose and the ancient canons were also quoted in support.[5]

Philip Melanchthon's *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* slammed the *Confutation*'s denial of faith as the second part. This was nothing less than to condemn the voice of the gospel itself, for thus the Papists deny that by faith we obtain remission of sins, and consequently 'treat the blood and death of Christ with scorn'. Only 'confusion and darkness' prevailed in medieval theology on repentance, and whether remission of sins occurs in attrition, contrition, by the power of the keys and so on. If repentance

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[2] Article 5 of the Ten, from *English Historical Documents, Vol. 5, 1485-1558*, ed. C.H. Williams (London, 1967), pp.801-802.
[3] AC, Article 12, Tappert, pp.34-35, *BSLK*, pp.66-67.
[4] Eg. See Lombard's *Sentences*. Lib.4, Dist. 16; *PL* 192, col. 1099.
[5] 'Christ Jesus gave to those set over the churches the authority to assign to those who confess the doing of penance, and through the door of reconciliation to admit to the communion of the sacraments those who have been cleansed by a salutary satisfaction' (Leo). 'The amount of the penance must be adapted to the trouble of the conscience' (Ambrose). From the *Confutation*, Article 12, *CR* 27, cols.109-14; Scripture texts quoted: Matthew 3.8; Romans 6.19; Acts 20.21; Matthew 4.17; Luke 24.47. For a survey of the

depends on contrition, why were Saul and Judas not saved, for both were sorry for their sins? Answer: they did not believe in the promise of the gospel. Thus the difference between Saul and David in the Old Testament and Peter and Judas in the New is not the seriousness of their sin, not the amount or quality of their contrition, not the satisfactions they attempted, but simply this: David and Peter had faith in the mercy of God, while Saul and Judas did not. Therefore contrition without faith profits nothing, and only drives to despair. Lutherans did not oppose confession on principle, but making it a binding law was oppressive, and naming all sins is impossible. The key point is faith in the promise of the gospel that sins are remitted freely for Christ's sake, not the 'endless enumeration of sins' so beloved of the Papists. Confession is no use without absolution, and even absolution avails nothing unless it is received by faith and believed. As for satisfactions – purgatory, pilgrimages, rosaries, indulgences and such like – these are utterly worthless. Contrite hearts troubled by sins should be taught that the gospel promises forgiveness and should believe it. If remission of sins depended on our satisfactions, no one will ever know whether his satisfactions are sufficient, and whether his sins really are remitted. Therefore the two parts – contrition for sin and faith in God's forgiveness – stood on firm Scriptural ground.[6]

However, Melanchthon would not object to a third part, provided that meant genuine fruits worthy of repentance, evidenced by an improvement of life and character, not these useless Papist satisfactions that the Lutherans

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medieval doctrine of penance, see A. Null, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of Repentance* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 28-64.

[6] *Apology*, Article 12, Tappert, pp.182-211, *BSLK*, pp.252-91. However, confession was still practised in Lutheran churches – see AC, Article 25, Tappert, p.61.1, *BSLK*, p.97.1; W. David Myers, *Poor, Sinning Folk: Confession and Conscience in Counter- Reformation Germany* (Ithaca & London, 1996), pp.67-69.

so despised.[7] He repeated this in his *Loci* of 1535.[8] This third part also appears in the Wittenberg Articles, of 1536, perhaps in the hope that giving good works a special mention might make Lutheranism a little more acceptable to King Henry.[9] The 'newness of life or new obedience' is the result of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of the penitent, creating desires conformed after God's Law; namely, faith, the love of God, the fear of God, hatred of sin, the steadfast purpose of avoiding sin, and all other good fruits. Thus the prophecy of Jeremiah that 'I will put my Law in their hearts' is fulfilled.[10]

This brings us to Article three of the Ten, 'The Sacrament of Penance'. The three parts were there, but defined a little differently. Contrition was first; on that all were agreed. Confession was second, just as the *Confutation*. The third was the 'amendment of the former life, and a new obedient reconciliation unto the laws and will of God, that is to say, exterior acts in works of charity according as they be commanded of God'.[11] So the Catholic format is there, but specific Catholic teaching on satisfactions is vague.

Then comes a twist. Contrition was subdivided into two, but the two 'must always be conjoined together and cannot be dissevered'. The first was sorrow and shame for sin, and fear of God, for the sinner 'hath no works or

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[7] *Apology*, Article 12, Tappert, pp.185.28, 188.45, *BSLK*, pp.257.28, 260.45.
[8] *CR* 21, col.489.
[9] Also, perhaps, due to the controversy with John Agricola, who had been teaching that the Law belonged to the past, whereas for Luther and Melanchthon it was essential for convicting man of his sin, and then the gospel would offer forgiveness and mercy (Brecht 3, pp.156-171). For full analysis and background of Melanchthon on repentance and his dispute with Agricola, see T. Wengert, *Law and Gospel, Philip Melanchthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over Poenitentia* (Grand Rapids, 1997), especially pp.200-06. We do not know how much Henry or the English knew about this, but it hardly matters, because as far as they were concerned the confessional Lutheran documents were the Augsburg Confession, the *Apology*, and now the *Loci*.
[10] Wittenberg Articles, Articles 4-5, printed in N. Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans* (St. Louis, 1963), pp. 258-268. Jeremiah 31.33.
[11] Article 3 of the Ten, *English Historical Documents 5,* ed. Williams, pp. 798-801.

merits of his own which he may worthily lay before God, as sufficient satisfaction for his sins'. The second was a 'certain faith, trust and confidence in the mercy and goodness of God' for forgiveness of sins, and not in the 'worthiness of any merit or work done by the penitent, but for the only merits of the blood and passion of our Saviour Jesus Christ'. Now the article seems to be turning in the Lutheran direction. This faith 'is gotten and also confirmed, and made more strong by the applying of Christ's words, and promises of His grace and favour contained in His gospel, and the sacraments instituted by Him'. It sounds as the article was accommodating the Lutheran emphasis on absolution and faith without excluding confession.[12]

To attain this certain faith, the article continued, 'the second part of penance was *necessary*, that is to say, confession to a priest if it *may be had*; for the absolution given by the priest was institute of Christ to apply the promises of God's grace and favours to the penitent'. The people must believe that the words of absolution spoken by the priest 'be spoken by the authority given to him by Christ in the gospel'.

The emphasis is mine, to highlight the slight contradiction. If confession is necessary, surely it *must* be had – unless 'necessary' here really meant desirable but not compulsory. Confessing every sin was not explicitly demanded. It could be inferred, but the enigmatic 'may be had' provided the sinner with a theological get-out clause.

Confession was still a sticking point in 1536, though less serious than the mass, communion in one kind and clerical celibacy, and it was getting

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[12] Note, however, that Catholics like John Fisher used to stress the importance of believing God's promise to forgive - Null, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of Repentance*, pp. 59-61.

very diplomatic treatment in the Ten Articles. Whereas absolution was 'instituted of Christ', confession, as 'a very expedient and necessary mean', did not quite reach the status of a divine command. This strongly suggests that Cuthbert Tunstall, who had strong views on confession by divine law, was not the author of this article.[13] Of course a Catholic might say that unless I confess I cannot be absolved, so the one includes the other. But a Lutheran might reply that I am forgiven not by my confession, no matter how penitently I may make it, but by faith in Christ's absolution; so as absolution is the more important of the two, the Article rightly made the fine distinction between the divine institution and that which is 'expedient'. Therefore both sides could claim the article for themselves. The subject had been much debated in Convocation and Parliament, so a calculated vagueness is more likely than oversight or misunderstanding.

Regarding the third part of Penance, though forgiveness is received by faith in Christ and His atoning death rather than works or satisfactions, bishops and preachers must teach their congregations that penitent people should 'bring forth the fruits of penance', namely prayer, fasting, giving alms and making restitution for wrongs done. Those who fail to do such deeds will never be saved, for these 'precepts and works of charity be necessary to our salvation, and God necessarily requireth that every man perform the same'. Again this phrasing was very diplomatic. The necessary fruits have a Catholic feel to them, but we are left to wonder whether the priest was still supposed to prescribe specific acts for specific individuals. The wording suggests that the

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[13] See Chapter 2, pp.116-17.

onus for producing the fruits of penance now lay with the penitent, which is more Lutheran than medieval.

The key question is whether this is a Catholic or Lutheran article. Its title – the 'Sacrament' of Penance – is not decisive for its Catholicity, because repentance was so called in Melanchthon's 1535 *Loci*, though of course Lutherans and Catholics understood the subjects differently, as the Augsburg documents make plain.[14] The question has to be answered from the contents. Confession gets more emphasis than the Lutherans were wont to give it, but scarcely sufficient to be adequately Catholic. Faith and absolution are more prominent here than in the Catholic *Confutation*, but perhaps not quite enough to be thoroughly Lutheran. The moral requirements for a new life are as interesting for their diplomacy as their theology. Papal satisfactions of course are discarded, but Catholics could still find a lifeline in the need for alms and fasting. On the other hand the authority of the priest to impose acts of penance is not expressly upheld (though those who wanted to find it could do so). This, and the absence of any distinction between mortal and venial sins, swings the balance once more in the Lutheran direction.[15]

So we have another formula of faith neither wholly Catholic nor wholly Lutheran, and sounding like a careful compromise. However, it is a Lutheran advance compared with the *Assertion*, where Henry maintained the traditional

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[14] Utiliter recensetur inter sacramenta et sacramentum poenitentiae ..... the church should absolve when people 'agunt poenitentiam': *CR* 21, col.485. Penance was also a sacrament at the beginning, if not the end, of Luther's *Babylonian Captivity*, *WA* 6, p.543, line 5; *LW* 36, p.124.

[15] Melanchthon on original and venial sin, from the *Loci Communes*, 1533-35,- Original sin is mortal sin, which remains in believers even after justification. It produces all kinds of evils - distrust of God, impatience, lust etc. Christians, however, confess these sins, repent and are freely forgiven. There is now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8.1). So these sins are not imputed to believers, and are therefore venial. Such sins are mortal, however, if the person persists in them against his conscience, and will not repent. Such a one

three parts of Penance – contrition, confession and medieval satisfactions – without any novel subdivisions, and barely mentioning faith and absolution.[16] Henry's church was moving slowly but perceptibly in a Lutheran direction.

It is now necessary to look at the most important Reformation issue of all.

Justification: sola fides

The Augsburg Confession restated the Lutheran Gospel moderately, that believers are justified freely for Christ's sake through faith. Good works can neither reconcile us to God nor obtain grace for us. They must be done, however; not to earn grace, but because this is God's will for the believer.[17]

> This was Luther's gospel of justification: God pardoning the undeserving sinner, not because of anything meritorious in him, but really in spite of his *de*merits; God forgiving freely for Christ's sake, and imputing Christ's righteousness to the believer. It is entirely an external (or 'forensic') act of divine grace, received by faith alone. Sanctification and good works follow, but this is logically a separate process.[18]

Before the decree of the Council of Trent in 1547, late medieval teaching on justification varied somewhat.[19] Men like Juan de Valdes and Gasparo Contarini, sounding very similar to Luther, believed in salvation by faith in Christ's atoning death, not meritorious works. Others like Paolo Giustiniani believed that an ascetic life apart from the world was necessary for

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is knowingly breaking God's commands, and could forfeit his salvation. In the unregenerate, all sins are mortal. *CR* 21, cols.327-330; 447-450.

[16] *Assertion*, pp. 63-78.

[17] AC, Articles 4, 20, Tappert, pp.30, 41-46, *BSLK*, pp.56-57, 75-83.

[18] See, for example, Brecht's discussion of Luther's '*Two Kinds of Righteousness*': Brecht 1, pp.229-30.

salvation.[20] Consequently the Catholic reaction to Luther varied as well, from outright hostility to a feeling that he spoke much truth.

The writers of the *Confutation* at Augsburg, probably as representative of the Roman church as could be found anywhere, reproved the Lutherans for denying that works are 'meritorious'. Though they have no merit in themselves, 'God's grace makes them worthy of eternal life'. Then they attacked the Lutherans from Scripture, quoting Daniel's sermon to Nebuchadnezzar – 'redeem thy sins with alms' – and Christ's to the Pharisees – 'Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you.' If faith alone without works saves, why did St. Peter urge Christians to 'give diligence by good works to make your calling and election sure?' And why were the Hebrew believers assured that 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed towards his name?' Surely *sola fides* is blown away by these and many similar texts. The Romanists did not reject the merits of Christ in salvation as the Lutherans alleged; Catholics 'know that our works are nothing and of no merit unless by

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[19] For Trent, see *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo et al. (3rd edn., Bologna, 1973), pp.671-81.

[20] For discussions on medieval attitudes to justification and different Catholic reactions to Luther, see E. Duffy, *Saints & Sinners: A History of the* Popes (New Haven, 1997), p.164; D. Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy: Cardinal Pole and the Counter Reformation* (Cambridge, 1972), pp.6-23, 69-88; E. Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome and Reform* (Berkeley & LA, 1993), pp.91-104, 294-96; A. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei, A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1998), pp. 243-250. Augustine's theology of justification 'shaped that of the whole Middle Ages' - R. Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge, 1991), p.112. In the same book Dr. Rex says that many early polemical writings against Luther ignored *sola fides*, and that Fisher was one of the first to perceive how fundamental it was to Luther's theology (pp.116-17). See also D. Bagchi, *Luther's Earliest opponents, Catholic Controversialists, 1518-1525* (Minneapolis, 1991), pp.159-163 – how *some* Catholic reaction to Luther's justification could be surprisingly muted. This is all relative, of course, and the author is not trying to minimise the real differences between Luther and his opponents.

virtue of Christ's passion'; but He commanded us to take up the cross, and anyone who does not do so is no true disciple.[21]

Philip Melanchthon's *Apology* must count as one of the classic works of the Reformation, particularly the articles on justification. As a defence of the Lutheran gospel and an answer to its critics, it has probably never been equalled. Subjects covered include Law and Gospel, justifying faith (as opposed to mere 'historical' faith), Christ's righteousness, the assurance of salvation, fulfilling the law and Christian charity.[22]

Of particular relevance to the Anglo-Lutheran relations is how he answered the Scripture texts quoted against the Lutherans – those commands, promises and rewards in the Old Testament and the Gospels – and reconciled them with justification by faith alone. A selection can be given here to make the point.

Catholics were fond of Christ's words about the penitent woman in St. Luke – that 'her sins, which are many, are forgiven for she loved much'. Melanchthon replied that Christ also said, 'thy *faith* has saved thee'. Therefore when she came to Jesus for forgiveness, she showed Him the highest form of worship and honour, effectively acknowledging Him as Messiah. Faith saved her, though love flowed out from that.[23]

Then when St. Paul wrote that 'though I have all faith to move mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing', he was not discussing *how* we are justified; for that we have to read Romans. Here he was writing to those

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[21] *Confutation*, Articles 4, 20, *CR* 27, cols.92-97, 121-23. Daniel 4.27: peccata tua eleemosynis redime, et iniquitates tuas misericordiis pauperum (Vulgate). Break off thy sins with righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor (AV). Also Luke 11.41; 2 Peter 1.10; Hebrews 6.10. Various other texts quoted as well.
[22] *Apology*, Article 4, Internet Parts 2-6, Tappert, pp.107-32, *BSLK*, pp.158-96.

justified already, urging them to bear fruit. Of course love is necessary; but it is also necessary not to steal, and no-one imagines he is justified merely by not stealing. Melanchthon agreed that love is the greatest Christian virtue, and that the command to love God and our neighbour is the essence of the Law; but regeneration is needed first, and only then can we begin to fulfil the Law.[24]

The Scripture most commonly used against the Lutherans was the epistle of St. James, at least until Melanchthon's rise to prominence. Whereas Luther would gladly have used James to 'fire my stove', Melanchthon treated him with respect.[25] Far from supporting the Papists, James preaches regeneration through the gospel alone – 'Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures'. Of course faith without works is dead, and James does us all a service by writing to jolt 'idle and secure minds', and distinguish between 'dead and living faith'. The first is inactive whereas the second produces all manner of good works. 'Since this faith is a new life, it necessarily produces new movements and works'. So good works must follow new birth, and cannot make us accepted before God without the gift of faith first. Nor does James contradict Paul. Paul wrote that the 'doers of the Law shall be justified'. Likewise James – citing Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac to God's command, and Rahab

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[23] Ibid, Internet, Part 6, 'Of love and fulfilling the law', Tappert, p.127, sections 152-54, *BSLK*, p.189.152-54, Luke 7.47-50.
[24] Ibid, Internet, Part 7, 'Reply to the arguments of the adversaries', Tappert, pp.137-141, *BSLK*, pp.201-07, 1 Corinthians 13.3. Other Sc. texts quoted are Matthew 22.27, Colossians 3.14; 1 Peter 4.8; Proverbs 10.12.
[25] *WA*, TR 5. 5854; *LW* 50, p.424 – probably spoken sometime in the early 1540s. On another occasion he announced, apparently with no little satisfaction, that James has been 'thrown out' of Wittenberg: *WA*, TR 5. 5443. Luther's doubts about whether James rightly belonged in the NT were historical as well as doctrinal; many in the ancient church did not accept it as canonical. See Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, Book 2, 23, 25, Loeb Classical Library

receiving the messengers – wrote that 'by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone'. Melanchthon agreed with both:

> 'Men having faith and good works are certainly pronounced righteous.
>
> For, as we have said, the good works of saints are righteous, and please on account of faith. For James commends only such works as faith produces, as he testifies when he says of Abraham: Faith wrought with his works. In this sense it is said that the doers of the Law are justified, that is that they are pronounced righteous who from the heart believe God, and afterwards have good fruits which please Him on account of faith, and accordingly, are the fulfilment of the Law. These things, simply spoken, contain nothing erroneous, but they are distorted by the adversaries.'[26]

So James and Paul agree after all, and what is more, both are good Lutherans!

Old Testament texts received similar treatment, for example: 'Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow'.

Melanchthon admitted that here is a call to do good. But 'without faith it is impossible to please God', and 'whatever is not of faith is sin'. So Isaiah was not just calling the Israelites to do a few token good things, because any

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(London, W. Heinemann, 1926-32) vol. 1, p.179; *WA*, DB 7, pp.384-5; *LW* 35, pp.395-397, note 47.

[26] *Apology*, Article 4, Internet, Part 8, 'Continuation of Reply to Arguments', Tappert, pp.141-43, sections 244-53, *BSLK*, pp.207-10. Main Sc. texts: Romans 2.13; James 2.21, 24.

hypocrite can do a few good deeds for show and to make an impression. Nor was he teaching remission of sins by works alone. The prophet was preaching repentance, then adding a promise. 'Cease evil' requires a new life, which requires faith before it can be pleasing to God. So also Jesus – 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven' – preached repentance when calling on us to forgive, then added the promise that ye also shall be forgiven. This newness of life requires faith, because a mere formal forgiveness will never merit grace. Similarly Daniel – 'Break off thy iniquities by showing mercy to the poor' – was not asking the king to perform an act of empty ceremonial charity. Like Isaiah and Jesus he was preaching repentance accompanied by a promise. Daniel and his friends had confessed the name of the God of Israel before the pagan king, and were seeking to convert him. Daniel's sermon was a call for a new life and a promise of remission of sins, and wherever there is a promise, faith is required, because the promise cannot be received any other way. All these passages must be understood in the light of the golden rule, that the Law cannot be fulfilled without Christ. 'Without Me ye can do nothing', Jesus said to the disciples, and without faith it is impossible to please God. Therefore Christ's sermon to the rich young ruler – 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments' – requires faith in Christ. So does His word to the Pharisees to 'give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you'. Jesus rejects Pharisaic ideas that washings, ritual cleansings and such things make us righteous before God. The Pharisees were the forerunners of the Papists, substituting their own traditions for the commands of God. So nowadays (Melanchthon's days) all this monasticism, distinctions of foods, papal regulations and so on had

obscured the light of the gospel. Jesus then and now calls for an inward, spiritual righteousness – the righteousness of faith – and then all that we do will be acceptable to God.[27]

Finally (for this purpose) Melanchthon sought to reconcile God's free grace to the undeserving with promises of rewards in Scripture. For example, how God will render to 'every one according to his works..... glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good'; and at the resurrection 'they that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life', because 'I was an hungered and ye gave Me meat', and 'whatsover ye have done to the least of these my brethren ye have done it to me':

> 'In these and all similar passages in which works are praised in the Scriptures, it is necessary to understand not only outward works, but also the faith of the heart, because Scripture does not speak of hypocrisy, but of the righteousness of the heart with its fruits. Moreover, whenever the Law and works are mentioned ..... Christ as Mediator is not to be excluded. For He is the end of the Law, and 'Without Me ye can do nothing'. According to this rule ..... all passages concerning works can be judged. Wherefore, when eternal life is granted to works, it is granted to those who have been justified, because no men except

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[27] *Apology*, Article 4, Internet, Part 8, 'Continuation of Reply to Arguments', Tappert, pp.143-150, sections 254-84, *BSLK*, pp.210-17. Scripture texts include Isaiah 1.16-18; Hebrews 11.6; Romans 14.23; Luke 6.37; Daniel 4.27; 3.29; John 15.5; Hebrews 11.6; Matthew 19.17; Luke 11.41.

justified men, who are led by the Spirit of Christ, can do good works; and without faith and Christ, as Mediator, good works do not please'.[28]

These extracts are given for two main reasons. First, they show that Melanchthon was determined to deal with the insinuations of his opponents that *sola fides* was nothing but a novelty based on a few verses in Paul's epistles, taken out of context, which disregarded all of Scripture's commands, promises and appeals to goodness and charity. *Sola Scriptura*, not *solus Paulus*, was the Lutheran foundation. Secondly, the object of this study is not just to establish what the Lutheran teaching on good works was, but also to try and understand how Henry VIII, that inveterate enemy of *sola fides* in the 1520s, had come to think that he and Lutherans were allies a generation later. There can be little doubt that Melanchthon's treatment of the subject influenced Henry's attitude to the Germans. No longer was it possible, even in a moment of anger, to accuse them of making faith a cloak for a wicked life, as the *Assertion* did.[29]

'Good works are necessary for salvation'.

When King Henry wrote his *Assertion*, no one would have imagined hearing words like these from Luther's Wittenberg, unless of course the arch heretic recanted and did penance. So the effect on Henry when they appeared in the Wittenberg Articles of 1536 and the Thirteen Articles of 1538, two sets of documents drawn up and agreed between English and Lutheran divines,

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[28] Ibid, Internet, Part 10, 'Third Continuation of Reply to the Arguments', Tappert, pp.163-65, sections 365-77, *BSLK*, pp.229-31. Scripture texts include Romans 2.6, 10; John 5.29; Matthew 25.34-45.
[29] *Assertion*, p.54.

must have hugely influenced his attitude to the Lutherans.[30] An even greater milestone in Anglo-Lutheran relations was the document on which the Wittenberg Articles were based: it was Philip Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* of 1535, dedicated to Henry. This revised edition of the *Loci* was the first confessional Lutheran work to relate good works directly to salvation.

The Loci Communes, 1535

The *Loci* emphasised that remission of sins is granted solely for Christ's sake, not on account of the worthiness of contrition, or love, or any work, and is received by faith.[31] Good works, however, are a necessary part of the obedience of the Christian, and for this we are justified, 'in order that we might live this new, spiritual life, the new obedience towards God'. Melanchthon quoted God's promise to Jeremiah – 'I will put my law in their hearts' – and St. Paul to the Romans – 'we are debtors, not to live after the flesh but according to the Spirit' – and the epistle to the Ephesians, in which the baptised are God's 'workmanship, created for good works which He has pre-ordained for us'. Now 'acceptance to eternal life and the gift of eternal life are joined with justification, that is remission of sins and reconciliation, which is received by faith; therefore eternal life is ours not on account of works or merits, but freely for Christ's sake'. So all is grace, and grace alone. Nevertheless 'good works are *necessary for eternal life* since they ought necessarily to follow our reconciliation' (emphasis mine). Paul warned the Corinthians that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and he felt the 'necessity laid upon me' to fulfil his apostolic calling, else 'woe unto me if I preach not

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[30] For Wittenberg Articles see Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans*, p.262. For Thirteen

the gospel'. These good works are not just external acts which can be feigned, but inward, spiritual motives in the heart – fear of God, love of God, trusting God in good times and bad.[32]

The good works of believers were given more dignity than in previous Lutheran writings. Imperfect though the works are, they nonetheless 'pertain to the glory of Christ, therefore their worth is great'. They are spiritual sacrifices with which God is well pleased, as St. Peter writes, and may even be called sacraments, 'signs of the will of God'. They bring corporal and spiritual rewards in this life, and even more so in the one to come.[33]

The *Loci* has a few more words on James. As James says, a man is justified by faith and works – provided that man is *already* righteous in the sight of God, as Abraham was. So a double justification is admitted: the first applies to the believer's initial conversion by grace alone, the second to his subsequent good works that God approves. These works, though, follow faith, and are impossible without it.[34]

Not surprisingly the same theme appeared also in the Wittenberg Articles: good works are 'not the payment of eternal life, nevertheless they are

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Articles see Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, p.473, Article 4.

[31] *CR* 21, cols.420-428.

[32] Et iustificamur ideo, ut nova et spirituali vita vivamus, quae est quaedam obedientia erga Deum.....Acceptatio ad vitam aeternam seu donatio vitae aeternae coniuncta est cum iustificatione, id est, cum remissione peccatorum et reconciliatione, quae fide contingit. Itaque non datur vita aeterna propter dignitatem bonorum operum, sed gratis propter Christum. Et tamen bona opera ita necessaria sunt ad vitam aeternum, quia sequi reconciliationem necessario debent. *CR* 21, col.429. Scripture texts: Jeremiah 31.33; Romans 8.12; Ephesians 2.10; 1 Corinthians 9.16; 6.9-10. The texts from Romans and Corinthians were quoted in Article five (Justification) of the Ten.

[33] tamen ad gloriam Christi pertinent, ideo magna earum dignitas est. *CR* 21, col.432. bona opera etiam Sacramenta sunt, hoc est, signa voluntatis Dei. *CR* 21, col.433, Scripture text, 1 Peter 2.5

[34] homo justificatur fide et operibus. *CR* 21, col.323; Utramque justitiam necessariam esse; justitiam fidei et justitiam operum. *CR* 21,col.439. Scripture texts: James 2.21, 24; Genesis 15.6.

necessary for salvation because they are a debt which ought of necessity to follow our reconciliation'.[35]

By studying the context it is clear what Melanchthon meant by 'necessary'. Good works are a necessary *consequence* of justification, but not a necessary *cause or pre-condition.* They are not compulsory in the sense of being a legal obligation, but a necessity born of love and obedience to our Saviour God. Mindful perhaps that he risked being misunderstood, Melanchthon stressed over and over again, almost to the point of tedium, that justification is through mercy alone, entirely independent of good works, and that God approves only the works of the just.[36]

The New Obedience: A New Lutheranism?

Melanchthon's *Loci* was well supported by Scripture texts and wholly loyal to *sola fides.* Still, there is a perceptible change of emphasis compared with earlier Lutheran writings. According good works a role of any kind in salvation – even a secondary, consequential role – was something new. A number of reasons might have brought about this development. The first was doctrinal. At Augsburg Melanchthon came face to face with Roman Catholic doctors and divines demanding to know how *sola fides* could be reconciled with passages like Daniel's 'break off thy sins with alms', and others discussed above. A considered answer had to be given. Preaching 'faith alone' from a pulpit in a church full of good Lutherans, who could be counted on not to ask any awkward questions, was a luxury not available to Melanchthon at

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[35] Article five, Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans*, p. 262.
[36] *CR* 21, cols.428-500.

Augsburg. There he had to defend his doctrine against learned adversaries well armed with Scripture texts proving, so they alleged, quite the opposite.

The *Loci* must also be set against the pastoral background. Despite the hostile accusations of their adversaries, Lutherans had never abolished good works. On the contrary, good works should follow justification out of gratitude for grace received, like a thanksgiving. With a willing mind the Christian would love and serve God and his neighbour. Or so it was taught and hoped.[37] Unfortunately in Wittenberg things were not working that way. Some parishioners were brazenly turning the liberty of the Gospel into licence, exactly what Luther's opponents had warned would happen. Luther became exceedingly hurt and angered by these developments, and he berated his congregations for their lack of Christian charity to one another. Moral values were no longer what they once were, the Lord's day was not hallowed as before, congregations were miserly when it came to supporting their pastors, while attendance at church was falling now that there was nothing meritorious in it. So upset was Luther by the growing godlessness that on the 1st January 1530 he threatened to quit preaching, but if this was a ploy designed to stir their hearts to more godly living it did not work.[38] Justification by faith alone was supposed to produce love for neighbour automatically, but here in Wittenberg – Luther's own backyard – it wasn't. Consequently an urgent pastoral need arose to impress on people the need for good works and a right Christian living.

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[37] Eg. Luther, '*Freedom of a Christian*', *WA* 7, pp.65-66; *LW* 31, pp.366-367; '*Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*', *WA*, DB 7, p.8 (line 30) – p.11 (line 27); *LW* 35, pp.370-71.
[38] Brecht 2, pp.287-90, 433. Apparently things did not improve much – see Brecht 3, pp.253-65.

A third reason was more personal, relating to the emergence of Philip Melanchthon as a Christian leader. Long before Augsburg he had stamped his character and thought on the German Reformation, and would continue to do so. He was not seeking to usurp Luther's crown, but a man of his learning and ability could hardly fail to leave some mark on the church, even with the Lutheran colossus living across the road. If Luther had brought to light the truth of justification, like the man who discovered the gospel treasure hidden in the field, Melanchthon was developing the subject in his *Loci,* exploring not only *how* we are justified but *why.*[39] Christians are justified, he argued, not merely to say and believe the right things, but in order to live a renewed, spiritual life as God's workmanship, created anew in Christ to do good works ordained of God.[40] So good works are not merely useful things for believers to be doing until they get to heaven (and the sooner that happens the better); rather they are the purpose, even the goal, of justification.

So a developing Lutheranism might be a better description of Melanchthon's writings in the 1530s, rather as though the earlier editions of a great book were being refined and touched up a little here and there, perhaps expanded upon, but at the same time not fundamentally altered.

Despite this, the *Loci* caused ripples in Wittenberg. Amsdorf and Stifel were unhappy about good works being 'necessary for salvation' and told Luther so, while Conrad Cordatus suspected that Melanchthon was undermining *sola fides* by making repentance a requirement for justification. Melanchthon defended his position before the Theology Faculty and all appeared to be settled, but Cordatus still felt that the *Loci* was too Erasmian

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[39] Matthew 13.44.

and should be recalled. Bugenhagen and Jonas, two Wittenberg heavyweights, backed Melanchthon. Luther had already approved the Wittenberg Articles as 'in agreement with our teaching' in a letter to Elector John Frederick dated the 28th of March 1536, but Cordatus' persistent complaints concerned him, and he began to be uneasy about *the 'necessaria ad salutem'*.[41]

Fortunately there is little room for uncertainty about Luther's real view of the *Loci*. During the winter of 1542-43 he advised anyone wishing to become a theologian to read the Bible first, then Philip's *Loci* diligently, until it was fixed in the mind. After that the whole of theology will be open to him, and he can read whatever else he likes. Apart from Holy Writ itself, no better book has ever been written than the *Loci*, which far surpasses anything the fathers have done.[42] Here Luther tacitly admitted that the *Loci* was better than his own works as well, so any problems he had with it were obviously resolved very soon.

This anecdote can be compared with a similar though earlier one in 1532. Fortified perhaps by a good dinner and German beer, Luther was being cheerfully irreverent about the church fathers: Jerome was useless, Chrysostom a gossip, and Basil not worth a penny. Augustine, Hilary and Ambrose escaped lightly by comparison; they were good, but none of them had done anything to compare with Philip's *Apology*.[43] It is interesting that in the *later* report (above) Luther mentioned the *Loci* rather than the *Apology*.

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[40] Ephesians 2.10. See also p.153 above.
[41] Brecht 3, pp.147-152; Wengert, *Law and Gospel*, pp.206-10; *LW* 50, pp.132-35.
[42] *LW* 54, pp.439-440, no. 5511.
[43] *LW* 54, pp.33-34, no. 252.

This does not suggest that the *Apology* had fallen from favour; but it does emphasise his high opinion of the *Loci.*[44]

Still, it is hardly surprising that some rumblings of discontent could be heard in Wittenberg when the new *Loci* was completed. We do seem to have travelled rather a long way since the early 1520s, when Luther shocked the Catholic world with allegations like a 'righteous man sins in all his good works', and that a good work, even when done well, is still a venial sin.[45] But when the context and the changed theological climate are allowed for, the difference appears more like a change of emphasis than a fundamentally new teaching. Luther was fighting the Papists' alleged work-righteousness, while Melanchthon, a generation later, had become seriously concerned about the danger of abusing the liberty of the gospel, and was anxious to assure potential converts like Henry VIII that the Lutherans were not libertines. Luther and Melanchthon both agreed that good works were bound to be imperfect and could never merit justification, but both also agreed that good works should be done. In the early days of the Reformation the accent was on the first; later Melanchthon shifted it onto the second, and with Luther's understanding and approval.

But the effect of the 'new' Lutheranism on Henry and the English talks cannot be overestimated. In the *Loci* good works were joined to salvation and eternal life for the first time in a Lutheran quasi-confessional document; and,

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[44] See also *WA*, TR 5. 5647 (There is no better book after Scripture than the *Loci*); 5787 (Read and re-read, with all diligence, the *Loci Communes*); 5788 (Melanchthon is an instrument of God – organum Dei); 5827 (*Loci* is better than all the fathers' works); 6439 (Luther says there is no need to publish his own works because there are good ones already, especially the *Loci*). Maybe it should be noted that these quotes come from the 'Table Talk', a set of recollections by others of things they heard Luther say, and not published until after his death. However, the 'Table Talk' is generally accepted as reliable.

moreover, in a document dedicated to Henry VIII with fulsome praise (too fulsome, many might feel) for his erudition and love of the truth. Henry was naturally delighted that one of Europe's most renowned scholars and theologians should regard him so highly, and sent Melanchthon a gift of two hundred crowns.[46] Twelve years ago Henry had been wrong – dead wrong – to charge Luther with making faith a cloak for a wicked life; but if that was what he really believed, then he *must* have thought that the Lutherans had changed after Melanchthon's *Apology* and *Loci*. In a way they had changed, but not quite in the way that Henry assumed. Good works were now endowed with a higher honour than before, and even a necessity (understood rightly). But – and this is the key point – they still played no part whatsoever in the way we first become acceptable and justified before God. That was still firmly faith *alone*.[47]

This is not the only significance of the *Loci*. Making good works 'necessary' to salvation, even as a result rather than a cause, was going too far for a later generation of Protestants. According to the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563, good works are enjoined on believers as 'pleasing and acceptable', but the words 'necessary to salvation' are missing.[48] The

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[45] *WA* 1, p.608, lines 10-11; *WA* 2, p.416, line 36. Comments dated 1518 & 1519 resp. See also Melanchthon's *Loci* (1521): the good works of Christians are unclean, and do not merit the name of righteousness: *CR* 21, col.178, section 91a, lines 1-9; *LCC* 19, p.106.
[46] Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans*, p.150.
[47] Had John Fisher lived, he too might have found the *Apology* and *Loci* more to his liking than the early 1520s Luther. See Rex, *Theology of John Fisher*, pp.118-121 for Fisher's treatment of faith, justification and good works. Henry, whatever his thoughts on Fisher personally, was probably still influenced by his theology to some degree. Fisher of course would have been skilled enough to see the gap that still existed between himself and Melanchthon.
[48] Article 11, 'We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings, Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine .....' Article 12, 'Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's Judgement; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a

Lutheran Formula of Concord of 1577, produced after a generation of theological and political tussles within Lutheran Germany, took a similar line. It admitted that Christians are bound to do good deeds as a declaration of faith and gratitude to God, but opposed making them 'necessary to salvation'.[49] The authors of these documents were not hostile to good works and Christian living, but they clearly felt that this part of the *Loci* was not uncompromisingly Protestant enough. On this Henry agreed, for it certainly appeared less Protestant than the Lutheranism of the 1520s. This apparent change pleased him, but it caused some concern to Melanchthon's successors.

Another notable feature of the *Loci* was the section on predestination and free will, which could scarcely have gone unnoticed in England. Melanchthon treated this problematic subject from the standpoint of Scripture, because debates about some mysterious 'hidden' will are pointless, and God can be known and trusted only through His Word. Because of original sin, man is incapable of the true knowledge of God, so without the work of God's Spirit in his heart, he cannot be converted or fulfil the Law of God. But this should not lead to despair, because the Spirit aids us in our weakness (Romans 8.26), helps us resist doubts, helps us fear and love God more. This promise is universal (he means that there is no pre-determined damnation for some). So three causes combine for salvation and righteous living: the Word, the Spirit and the human will assenting to Him. Basil and Chrysostom were

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lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.' Source: E. Gibson, *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (2nd edn., London, 1898), pp.388, 410.

[49] Tappert, p.476.8-10, p.477.16, pp.551-58, *BSLK*, pp.788.8-10, 789.16, 936-50. The Formula of Concord contains no specific repudiation of Melanchthon personally or the *Loci*, and was directed more against Georg Major following the so-called 'Majoristic' controversy. See E. Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford, 1991), p.364; R. Kolb, *Luther's Heirs*

quoted in support. Thus the baptised can begin to fulfil God's Law, though imperfectly; nevertheless, they are accepted for Christ's sake.[50]

Melanchthon was countering the notion – a kind of caricature of Lutheranism – that human beings are mechanical devices with a switch on them, set automatically to 'off' until God quite arbitrarily flicks some to 'on' while leaving others as they are. That would make God responsible for man's unbelief, so in *that* sense there is a role for the will in conversion, and in staying converted. However, Melanchthon's 'assenting will' does no more than *receive* divine grace as a gift; it is not a 'work' done to supplement or make perfect our justification, and it is impossible without the Holy Spirit. It is like a sick man wanting to get better: he must accept the medicine the doctor offers him, else the medicine will do him no good; but though his acceptance is essential to his cure, it is not *intrinsically a part* of the cure. Only the doctor can provide the cure (*solus Christus*), the patient has done nothing to earn it (*sola gratia*), and the medicine is only effective in the patient if he obediently receives it (*sola fides*).

Henry may well have found the *Loci* on free will more to his liking than Luther's '*Bondage of the Will*', 1525.[51] But there is nothing *meritorious* in

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Define His Legacy: Studies on Lutheran Confessionalisation (Aldershot, 1996), pp.136-51, 455-68.

[50] *CR* 21, cols. 373-77. Extracts include these: In hoc exemplo videmus coniungi has causas: verbum, Spiritum sanctum et voluntatem, non sane otiosam, sed repugnantem infirmitati suae – col.376. Melanchthon had the trials of faith of believers chiefly in his mind (de tota vitae piorum - col.377). He rejected the 'nonsense' of the Manicheans, who ascribe no action to the will at all (qui prorsus nullam voluntati actionem tribuebant, ne quidem adiuvante Spiritu sancto, quasi nihil interesset inter statuam et voluntatem – col.377). Dico voluntatem in piis actionibus et conatibus non esse otiosam, sed tamen adiuvandam esse a Spiritu sancto: ita fit verius libera – col.377.

[51] See Brecht's discussion on the 'Bondage of the Will' – Brecht 2, pp.224-36. Luther appeared to rule out any human contribution to salvation at all, and to make everything happen according to divine necessity. What, then, of Scripture texts like this: 'Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live.' And: 'For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore, turn yourselves, and live'. (Ezekiel 18. 23, 32). Luther replied that

Melanchthon's assenting will. The point may seem a fine one, but that merely highlights how misunderstandings could arise, especially when once again in this work dedicated to King Henry, Melanchthon was going too far for the tastes of some of those who came after him.[52]

One other indication that the Lutherans had changed for the better in Henry's eyes was Melanchthon's favourable treatment of the epistle of James, first in his *Apology* and then again in the *Loci.* Maybe he was just a little bit out of step with some in Wittenberg, but Henry was not to know that in 1535. So far as the English were concerned, Melanchthon's was the authentic voice of Lutheranism.

Ezekiel speaks of the 'preached and offered mercy' of God, not of that 'hidden and fearful will' of God for ordaining by His counsel who would be recipients and partakers of His proclaimed and offered mercy. This will should not be inquired into, but 'reverently adored'. (Qui de praedicata et oblata misericordia Dei loquitur, non de occulta illa et metuenda voluntate Dei ordinantis suo consilio, quos et quales praedicatae et oblatae misericordiae capaces et participes esse velit. quae voluntas non requirenda, sed cum reverentia adoranda est..... *WA* 18, p. 684, lines 34-38; *LW* 33, pp.138-39. This seems to teach that God has two irreconcilable wills, one hidden, one revealed in Scripture. If God does not desire our death, Luther admitted, the fact that we perish must be charged to our own will. This is true of the 'God who is preached', who wishes all men to be saved because He comes to all by the Word of salvation (1 Timothy 2.4). Whoever refuses Him is at fault, as Jesus said: 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not' (Matthew 23.37). But why that majesty does not take away or change this fault of our will in all persons, when it is not in the power of man to do so, or why He imputes it to man when man cannot be free from it, we should not inquire into, and if you inquire much would never find out. (Igitur recte dicitur: Si Deus non vult mortem, nostrae voluntati imputandum est, quod perimus. Recte, inquam, si de Deo praedicato dixeris. Nam ille vult omnes homines salvos fieri, dum verbo salutis ad omnes venit, vitiumque est voluntatis, quae non admittit eum, sicut dicit Matthew 23: Quoties volui congregare filios tuos et noluisti? Verum quare maiestas illa vitium hoc voluntatis nostrae non tollit aut mutat in omnibus, cum non sit in potestate hominis, aut cur illud ei imputet, cum non possit homo eo carere, quaerere non licet, ac si multum quaeras, nunquam tamen invenies. *WA* 18, p.686, lines 4-11; *LW* 33, p.140. It was not unknown for Luther to go a little over the top in his polemical writings. Still, how the man who wrote the 'Bondage of the Will' could later praise the *Loci* in such glowing terms, and without retracting his earlier words, is an intriguing subject, one which I hope to treat another time. For now it is enough that we can prove that he did.

[52] For these later disputes, see Cameron, *The European Reformation*, p.364; Kolb, *Luther's Heirs Define His Legacy*, pp.1-17, 325-43, 136-51; C. Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer* (Westport, Connecticut, 1975), pp.293-302. The Formula of Concord does not like the 'assenting will' (Tappert, pp.469-72, 519-39, *BSLK*, pp.776-81, 866-912) though it is not clear whether the writers were referring to Melanchthon personally or other 'Philippists' like Johann Pfeffinger.

The Ten Articles Re-viewed

Article five of the Ten can now be reviewed in the light of the *Loci.* Melanchthonian phrases are repeated, like the necessity of good works for everlasting life, and so are some of the Scriptures he quoted.[53] A key section is this one:

> 'That sinners attain this justification by contrition and faith joined with charity, after such sort and manner as we before mentioned and declared; not as though our contrition, or faith, or any works proceeding thereof, can worthily merit or deserve to attain the said justification; for only the mercy and grace of the Father, promised freely unto us for Christ's sake, and the merits of His blood and passion, be the only sufficient and worthy causes thereof'.

The article continues:

> 'after we be justified we must also have good works of charity', and 'good works are necessarily required to the attaining of everlasting life; and we being justified, be necessarily bound' to do good works.[54]

There are three distinct though related themes here:

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[53] Romans 8.12, 14 (We are debtors, not to live after the flesh.....For as many are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God) and 1 Corinthians 6.9-10 ('Those who do such things (evil works) shall not inherit the kingdom of God').

(1) Justification is by 'contrition and faith joined with charity';

(2) Justification is by grace and mercy *alone*; there is no *merit* in our faith, contrition, charity or anything else. However .....

(3) Good works are still necessary for everlasting life (or salvation).

The first of the above, taken in isolation, might indeed suggest, as Richard Rex has argued, that Luther's 'faith *alone*' was being diplomatically but firmly resisted.[55] For here charity was granted a role in justification. However, after the *Loci*, who can be certain that it was a Catholic role? Justification by 'faith *joined* with charity' is not quite the same thing as the Catholic faith *formed* or *perfected* by it. If charity should be 'joined' to faith as a necessary consequence of justification in the Melanchthonian manner – and so necessary that, without it, the justification would be doubtful or even void – then this statement could conceivably be read in a Lutheran way.

The second point seems pure Lutheran, but according to Dr. Rex this entire article was 'impeccably loyal' to Augustine and contained 'nothing that could not be found in the writings of John Fisher'.[56] In other words the gap between the Lutherans and *some* medieval Catholics (like Fisher, Contarini

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[54] *English Historical Documents 5,* ed. C.H. Williams, pp.801-802. Scripture texts: Romans 8.12; Matthew 19.17; 1 Corinthians 9.16; 6.9-10; Matthew 5.20.
[55] R. Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1993), pp.145-148.
[56] Rex, *Henry VIII*, pp.145-148. See also Null, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of Repentance*, pp.59-61, 77-81. Fisher was one of many Catholic divines influenced by Augustine, and whilst Henry had no reason to honour Fisher personally – a man he executed as a traitor less than a year ago – his regard for Augustine has been seen already in Chapters 1 & 2. Examples of Augustine on justification and charity include these: 'That faith purifieth the heart, which worketh by love', *PL* 38, col.369.11; *NPNF* 6, p.269.11. 'Faith with love' is the wedding garment, *PL* 38, cols.562.6-564.9; *NPNF* 6, pp.394.6-395.9; Matthew, 22.1-14. 'For if he have faith without hope and love, he believeth that Christ is, but he doth not believe on Christ', *PL* 38, col.788.2; *NPNF* 6, p.538.2. 'Faith is mighty, but with out hope and love it profits nothing'; even devils have faith, but not love, *PL* 35, col.1435.21; *NPNF* 7, p.46.21.

and others) is hard, even impossible, to detect in a fairly general statement of faith.

The third point intriguingly combines 'grace alone' with the 'necessity' of good works for everlasting life, even though there is no saving *merit* in those works. This was the teaching of the *Loci*; it was also very Augustinian, and on the face of it, quite acceptable to many in the medieval church as well.

So the article as a whole contains a sophisticated blending of Augustine and the *Loci*, doubtless calculated to appeal to the king and pacify the Convocation. And only a subtle, highly developed mind could have conceived so fascinating a document as this – a unique formulary of faith which glides between the Catholic and Lutheran, swinging teasingly first one way then the other without ever settling firmly in either, yet ending up just about acceptable to both.

As with the Six Articles, the Ten have that confessional ambiguity which suggests that the author was a layman and diplomat, not a theologian or divine. However, that layman was not King Henry. An intriguing confessional inexactness is about the only thing the Six and the Ten have in common. The same mind would not devise both. The Six are a hotchpotch, but the Ten are absorbing and skilfully crafted. Nor is there is anything outrageous in the Ten, like keeping private masses for quasi-evangelical reasons, and making clerical celibacy a divine law. Besides, the Ten do not faithfully reflect Henry's real beliefs, as the Bishops' Book makes clear.

Justification in the Bishops' Book

Otherwise known as the *Institution of a Christian Man*, this work was completed in September 1537 by a committee of senior clergy. Henry spent the winter months of November and December perusing it and making notes in the margin, before sending it back to the bishops, including Cranmer, for their comments. Henry's notes and Cranmer's replies (completed in January 1538) tell us much about the faith of each man.[57]

The opening section on the Creed confessed that 'He is my very God, my Lord and my Father, and that I am His servant and His own son by adoption and grace, and the right inheritor of His kingdom'. To this Henry added a rider: 'So long as I persevere in His precepts and laws'. This elicited quite a lecture from Cranmer on the nature of faith and good works. True Christian faith, he wrote, is that of Job – 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' Persevering in precepts and laws 'is not the commendation of a Christian man's faith, but a most certain proposition, which also the devils believe most certainly, and yet they shall never have their sins forgiven by this faith, nor be inheritors of God's kingdom; because they lack the very Christian faith, not trusting to the goodness and mercy of God for their own offences'. A lengthy discussion followed on how true faith produces love for God, right and holy desires, sorrow for sin and trust in God's mercy, and it is all very Lutheran. Perhaps Cranmer was the only man in England who would dare speak so frankly and fearlessly to King Henry.[58]

Similar exchanges re-appear elsewhere in the Book. For example: 'The faith and belief of this of Christ's resurrection (*we living well)*, is our triumph

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[57] Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, pp. 83-115; D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven and London, 1996), pp.206-208.

over the Devil, hell and death', according to Henry (italics mine). The right faith indeed requires good living, agreed Cranmer, 'but yet our triumph and victory over the devil, hell and death standeth not in our well living, but in Jesus Christ; to whom whensoever we convert in heart and mind, we have the triumph and victory of the devil and sin'.[59]

The section on the fall of Adam and its effects on mankind was very Lutheran in tone:

> 'By nature born in sin..... a child of wrath condemned to everlasting death..... all the other principal parts or portions of my soul, as my reason and my understanding, and my free-will, and all the other powers of my soul and body, not only so destituted and deprived of God, wherewith they were first endued, but also blinded, corrupted and poisoned with error, and carnal concupiscence.....utterly dead to God and all godly things utterly unable and insufficient to of mine own self to observe the least part of God's commandments.'[60]

Such a grim assessment of fallen humanity affords little scope for free will in salvation, so it is rather surprising that it escaped Henry's criticism, because in the section on repentance the king had this to say:

> 'Though by baptism and faith we become the children of Christ, yet we living in this vale of misery and continuing in the same shall by penance

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[58] Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, pp.84-88.
[59] Ibid. pp.92-93.
[60] Ibid, pp.87.

and other good works of the same be made meet and apt and assured to receive the virtue of Christ's passion, which is our everlasting life'.[61]

Which implied that baptism and faith without penance and good works do not *fully* make us meet and apt; and also, strangely, that even though we may be children of Christ, a quota of good works is still needed for eternal life. This is emphatically not the teaching of the *Loci*; there the virtue of Christ's passion is received by faith alone, and good works are a necessary *consequence*. Again Cranmer took his king to task. As soon as the penitent repents, he insisted, 'for Christ's sake only he is made partaker of Christ's passion, and good works follow thereof; but they be not the cause of the same'.[62]

This section on repentance is especially revealing. Here is a quote from the Bishops' Book, with Henry's comments in brackets:

'The penitent must conceive certain hope and faith that God will forgive him his sins, and repute him justified, and of the number of His elect children, not (*only*) for the worthiness of any merit or work done by the penitent, but (*chiefly*) for the only merits of the blood and passion of our Saviour Jesus Christ'.[63]

Now Henry was in serious trouble with his archbishop. 'These two words ('only' and 'chiefly') may not be put in this place at any wise', admonished Cranmer severely. 'For they signify that our election and justification cometh partly of our merits, though chiefly it cometh of the goodness of God. But

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[61] Ibid, p.96.

certain it is, that our election cometh only and wholly of the benefit and grace of God, for the merits of Christ's passion, and for no part of our merit and good works'.[64]

Cranmer was bold, but on safe ground, entirely consistent with the Ten Articles, where divine grace was the sole cause of justification. Henry, with his 'only' and 'chiefly', *was in breach of the Ten.* Nor was this an isolated royal lapse, because at the end of the book there is another of Henry's marginal notes: 'The *chief* and *first* mean whereby sinners attain the same justification' was the zeal and love of Christ who redeemed us by His Passion. (Emphasis mine.) Patiently Cranmer explained justification in Lutheran terms one more time.[65]

More examples could be given, but these suffice to show that while Cranmer was Lutheran on justification, Henry's beliefs were unclear and inconsistent. His 'persevering in precepts and laws' and 'we living well' *may* have been a clumsy misunderstanding of Melanchthon's treatment of good works as a necessary consequence of salvation. It may also betray a latent Pelagianism in Henry. He could even sound like a modern evangelical after an Alpha course, making a decision for Christ and giving his life to the Lord. For example Cranmer pounced on the words 'having assured hope and confidence in Christ's mercy, *willing* to enter into the perfect faith', as if faith was a matter of personal choice. Again, this may be a misreading of

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid, p.95.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Cranmer to Henry:- All have sinned, God's law condemns us and works fear in us, drives us to seek the mercy freely offered in the Gospel. Good works are bound to follow; and, imperfect though they may be, 'by the merit and benefit of Christ' they are pleasing to God. But works done before justification 'be not allowed and accepted before God, although they appear never so good and glorious in the sight of man'. Those who imagine they can come to justification by

Melanchthon's 'assenting will'. Whatever Henry meant, Cranmer tried to clarify things: 'He that hath assured hope and confidence in Christ's mercy hath already entered into a perfect faith', he explained.[66]

More to the point, Henry in the Bishops' Book contradicted the Ten Articles issued a mere year and a half earlier. Whatever doctrinal label is attached to the Ten – Melanchthonian, Augustinian Catholic or some other – it would not fit Henry's comments in the Bishops' Book. The dissimilarity over justification is too great to rely on Henry's claim that he had been 'constrained to put his own pen to the book and conceive certain articles which were agreed on by Convocation', even though Burnet supported it.[67] He may have used his own pen, but someone else was leading, influencing and manipulating him, unlike the Bishops' Book where could express his beliefs in his own words.

Lutheran in Disguise

The identity of this guiding hand should hardly be a mystery. Cranmer can be discounted, because his notes in the Bishops' Book are much more direct and explicitly Lutheran than the judicious, tactful author of the Ten. A good Catholic like Tunstall is also highly unlikely. The Ten were inadequately Catholic for him, and made too many concessions to Wittenberg.[68] The four missing sacraments, for example, had caused dissension among the bishops,

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the law, their own deeds or merits 'go from Christ and renounce His grace'. Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, pp.112-114).

[66] Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, p.113.

[67] *LP* 11.1110; Burnet 1, pp.342, 347.

[68] See also note on p.143 above.

leaving some conservatives highly displeased.[69] The Ten Articles were composed by a master diplomat with a sound grasp of theology, and there is really only one candidate remaining: Foxe's 'mighty wall and defence of the church', Henry's Lutheran chief minister in spiritual as well as temporal affairs – Thomas Cromwell.

Cromwell presided over Convocation during 1536 when the articles were formulated and enacted, and was as closely involved in their genesis as any clergyman. On 1st April Chapuys told Charles V that the prelates were in daily communication about articles of religion. Next month the return of the English delegation from Wittenberg gave the bishops more to talk and disagree about. On the 9th of June Convocation opened, with Cromwell presiding as Vicar-general. Bishops and prelates had to rise and do obeisance to this self-made and self-taught layman as he entered the hall and sat in the place of honour, doubtless to the chagrin of the conservative faction, at least one of whom deplored this 'scandalous sight'. After an opening sermon from Latimer the assembly got down to business. Religion was not the only item on the agenda, because the invalidity of Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn was confirmed on the 21st at Cromwell's behest. On the 23rd a protestation was sent from the lower to the upper house concerning sixty-seven allegedly heretical opinions, sparking off a lively debate among the divines, again with Cromwell attending. A few days later the Ten Articles were brought into the upper house by Cromwell, and after

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[69] *LP* 12 (1) 789 p.346; Burnet 1, p.349. They are included in the Bishops' Book - Cranmer, *Misc Writings*, pp.96-99.

another discussion, accepted by a majority of bishops. Eventually they were presented to both houses by Bishop Fox of Hereford on the 11th July.[70]

Seven days later Cromwell, already in possession of powers of visitation over the church hitherto applied chiefly to the monasteries, was made 'omnicompetent' Vice-Gerent, invested with 'unlimited ecclesiastical jurisdiction in England' and also 'official precedence over the episcopate'.[71] This unprecedented advancement so soon after the passing of the articles suggests that Cromwell's role was more than one of simply overseeing proceedings.

The timing was also quite auspicious for Cromwell. The articles must have been composed during June. But Henry had married Jane Seymour on the 20th of May, so he might have had more agreeable things on his mind and heart that summer than arbitrating between quarrelling bishops and theologians. Thus Cromwell the faithful servant could easily have seized his chance by offering to draft them himself and then present them to the king at an opportune moment.

The character and position of Thomas Cromwell is relevant as well. He was a statesman not a theologian, and he thought and acted like one. He could see the danger to civil peace and order if good works, which had been part of the Christian religion and teaching for centuries, were all of a sudden discarded or treated as some minor theological appendage. Whether faith entirely alone was doctrinally correct or not, some would inevitably take advantage of it. Charity to neighbour, honesty in trade, obedience to rulers – all this and more might suffer. As chief minister of the civil power Cromwell

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[70] *LP* 10.601, p.244; Burnet 1, pp.339-347; J. Collier, *An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain* (London, 1708-14), Vol. 2, Book 2, pp.119-122; Foxe 5, pp.378-384; *LP* 11.123.

could appreciate this perhaps better than academics and divines, so he had good reason to welcome the new emphasis on good works.

Cromwell must have realised that although it was not practicable to bring in the entire Ausgburg Confession at once, it could nevertheless be done in stages. If that meant throwing a few crumbs to Catholic sensitivities on penance and justification, then so be it, at least as a temporary measure. Dogmatic exactness might matter less to a diplomat than a divine, especially one so powerful and confident of his ability to make further if gradual progress elsewhere. For the Vice-Gerent was able to proceed on more than one front. Papal authority had been rejected by the Act of Supremacy, and soon the monasteries – the papacy's bases in England – would be closed down. Soon, too, the English Bible would be published, taught by preachers licensed officially by the king (in practice by Cromwell or Cranmer) and read in homes and schools by an increasingly literate laity. These developments were forging ahead rapidly under Cromwell's direction and leadership, thus laying the foundations for a lasting reformation. In the circumstances the pragmatic Cromwell might have felt that the country could live with a few medieval leftovers for just a little longer, especially as all of this would soon melt away when the Word was sown in every parish of the realm, and popery damaged beyond repair.

I suggest, therefore, that the Ten Articles were substantially the work of Thomas Cromwell, easing as much Lutheranism past King Henry as he knew he could in 1536, making much of it, particularly the sections on penance and justification, sound as Patristic as possible. The Augustinian flavour to these

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[71] A.G.Dickens, *The English Reformation* (2nd edn., London, 1989), pp.142-143.

articles is undeniable, but the Melanchthonian ingredient is there too. The date and content of the *Loci,* the dedication to Henry, the sending of a copy to Cromwell personally the previous August, and the general warming of Anglo-Lutheran relations – all this is impossible to ignore in a study of the Ten Articles.[72] Henry began to feel that the Lutherans were becoming more Patristic, more like Augustine on faith and charity. Meanwhile the opposition of the Catholic party lost some of its sting now that faith could be joined with charity. The prospects for evangelising England were boosted now that Reformers could preach justification freely, provided only that they added the rider on the necessity of good works, which the more responsible among them were more than willing to do. Perhaps most important, the added value given to charity might make pious churchgoers more inclined to the new faith. So astute diplomacy and religious conviction combined to produce a Lutheran-ish article, issued in the name of a Catholic-ish king, which allowed Lutheran men to preach mostly freely and legally in what was still largely a 'Catholic' country, *and* which kept good works and charity central to civil and religious life. Apart from Cromwell, few had the desire, the ingenuity and the means to achieve this.[73]

But how did Cromwell manage to get this article on justification approved by Henry? Here we can only surmise, but the answer may be fairly

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[72] *LP* 9.226.

[73] One more example of diplomatic resourcefulness in the article on justification is worth noting, namely that God requires 'inward contrition, perfect faith and charity'. The 'inward contrition' is not controversial, and the 'charity' has been discussed already. The middle one is interesting, for 'perfect faith' was not normal Lutheran language. What mattered for Lutherans was the *object* of faith (Christ) not the amount or quality of it. Weak faith or a little faith will save, so long as it rests on Christ. Eg. Romans 14.1 – 'Him that is weak in the faith receive'; also how often Jesus called his apostles men 'of little faith'. So this 'perfect faith' may suggest the Catholic faith formed by love. Alternatively, I suspect (though it is impossible to prove) that this was Cromwellian code for *justifying* faith as opposed to a mere *historical* faith that

simple. All Cromwell had to do was wait for the right moment, and then present Henry with a formula he could not refuse: one which, to quote Richard Rex again, was 'impeccably loyal' to Augustine, the church father more highly valued perhaps than all the others in western Christendom. This, and the 'necessity' of good works to salvation, temporarily anaesthetised Henry's semi-Pelagian streak, though that revived by the time he started working on the Bishops' Book.

Nor is there any obvious reason why a man able to rise from humble beginnings to Vice-Gerent, could not also grasp the essentials of theology, especially with the Augsburg Confessions and the *Loci* to refer to, and also Cranmer, Latimer, Barnes and others to consult as required.[74] The fact that Henry did exalt this layman and blacksmith's son over all his bishops and nobles, speaks volumes not only for Cromwell's abilities, but also for Henry's estimation of him. In 1536 at least, Cromwell was high in royal favour. So it is quite plausible that Henry trusted him, and either delegated the drafting of the articles to him, or listened closely to him during the drafting, giving Cromwell a greater influence over the Ten than Tunstall had over the Six. As king and head of the church, Henry no doubt expected Cromwell to do what he (Henry) wanted. In the summer of 1538, things were a little different. The three disputed points were matters on which Henry had strong personal views. Doubtless guessing that Cromwell (and Cranmer too) would try to lead him in

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Reformers accused the Catholics of having: see Cranmer in the Bishops' Book, for example: Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, p.113.

[74] Diarmaid MacCulloch for one is unconvinced by Rory McEntegart's speculation that Cromwell was a little out of his depth on theology. See R. McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden, 1531-1547: Faction, Foreign Policy and the English Reformation' (London School of Economics Ph. D., 1992), pp.238-42; MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p.216, fn.150.

a Lutheran direction – one that he did not want to take – he chose the traditionalist Tunstall instead.

Even if, for the sake of argument, we concede that the Ten Articles were still broadly 'traditional', the point is that in 1536 they were hardly serving a 'traditional' (anti-Lutheran) purpose. While appearing as the man pioneering the king's 'middle way' – that is his 'Patristic' way, neither wholly medieval Catholic nor wholly Protestant – Cromwell at the same time was ensuring that more and more of the Lutheran gospel would spread around the country, apparently with the king's consent. Cromwell's keen mind could also see that he could now make Lutheranism (or, to be particular, Melanchthonianism) respectable and acceptable in England, certainly in the eyes of the King. After the *Loci*, the Lutherans were not wicked heretics any more. Differences remained, but Henry was keen to discuss them and settle them.

Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once famously described former President Gorbachev as a man we can 'do business with'. They still had much business to do, but the enmity of the Cold War had gone. I suggest that in the middle 1530s Henry felt the same way about the Lutherans, and that Cromwell was skilfully influencing him in that direction.

Review

The next Anglo-Lutheran statement on justification came in the Thirteen Articles, drawn up by English and Lutheran divines in 1538, though never made law in England. Again good works were 'necessary to salvation'. It is

so similar in substance to the one in the Wittenberg Articles that it is not clear why it was produced at all.[75]

After this, in August 1538, the Germans wrote directly to Henry on the three disputed points – communion in one kind, private masses and clerical celibacy. Henry replied, and next year the Act of Six Articles was passed, as discussed in the previous chapter. Justification was not regarded as a contentious subject in 1538; hence Henry's astonishing statement to the Cleves delegation that he and his German guests were agreed on it, and that he and the German divines should negotiate further on points of disagreement.[76] If Henry was bluffing or trying to bully the Germans into further talks, it is hard to see what his motive could have been. The only reasonable explanation for his words is a misunderstanding. Henry thought the radical Lutheranism of the 1520s had given way to a more moderate variety, consistent with the teaching of the church fathers.

Three developments can account for this. First, reports reached Henry of Melanchthon's conciliatory attitude at Augsburg, reflected in the Augsburg Confession. Next came Melanchthon's treatment of faith and good works in his *Apology*, as described above. The third and most decisive point was Melanchthon's *Loci* of 1535, which confirmed the place of good works in the Lutheran Gospel – as a necessary consequence, though not a cause or pre-

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[75] Justification is 'not through worthiness or merit of our repentance, works or merit, but through faith freely for Christ's sake'. This faith is neither dead nor hypocritical, but a faith 'which of necessity has hope and love, together with the desire to live aright, inseparably joined to itself'. Good works are 'necessary to salvation', in the following sense. 'Not because they make a sinner just, nor because they are the payment for sins, nor because they are a cause of justification; but because it is necessary that he who has now been justified by faith and reconciled to God through Christ strive to do the will of God according to the passage, "Not everyone that saith unto me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven". Indeed, whosoever does not strive to do these works but lives according to the flesh neither has the true faith, nor is he righteous, nor will he attain eternal life'. Cranmer, *Misc Writings*, p.473, Article 4.

condition, of salvation. Henry, this study suggests, got consequence and cause a little mixed up. Then he intended the Ten Articles – 'faith joined with charity'– in a 'Patristic' sense, but without wanting to rebuff the Lutherans, because he felt they were becoming more 'Patristic' as well, a development he welcomed. The evidence suggests that the mind behind the Ten was Cromwell's. Whether he realised Henry was mistaken on justification and took advantage of it, is impossible to say. He knew that he could never force an unwanted creed on the king, but if Henry felt that he and the Lutherans were closer than they actually were, Cromwell was not going to dissuade him.

Maybe Henry's Catholic Bishops should have clarified things for him. But following the executions of More and Fisher, and with their most formidable operator, Stephen Gardiner, serving as ambassador to France from 1536-38, perhaps they preferred the line of least resistance. From what has been seen of Tunstall in the previous chapter, it seems that he was less willing than Cranmer to assert himself in the king's presence, and content to indulge Henry's theological vagaries so long as they remained sort-of Catholic. Others in the Catholic party probably felt the same, and with good reason, because faith 'joined with charity' could be taken in a Catholic sense by those who wished to do so. The gap between the mature and mellowed Lutheranism of the *Loci* on one hand, and on the other a streamlined medieval faith that owed more to Augustine than the scholastics, could look rather narrow when the two were written down on paper.[77]

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[76] See Chapter 2, p.136.

[77] Take, for instance, the Catholic-Lutheran conference in Regensburg, 1541, where a formula on justification was reached fairly painlessly, only for talks to break down on the authority of the church and transubstantiation. See Brecht 3, pp.224-25; Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy*, pp.45-61; Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, pp.186-256; P. Matheson, *Cardinal Contarini at Regensberg* (Oxford, 1972), pp.105-70.

But whatever the secret thoughts and intents of Cromwell or the Catholics, and whatever the subtleties of the issue, Cranmer in the Bishops' Book did his eloquent best to explain the precise relationship between faith and good works for his king. If Henry read what his archbishop wrote, either he took no notice, or somehow it did not register. Thus Henry was left without excuse; he simply had not understood justification, nor thought it through, fully. Nor does he seem to have appreciated how vital this subject was at the Reformation, for the story of the Ten Articles shows that, unlike the three disputed points, justification was an issue on which Henry could be manipulated against his will.

Such a right royal blunder by the Defender of the Faith, could not be kept hidden forever. It was only a matter of time before this issue flared up. When that happened, someone would pay for it.

Chapter 4: How have the Mighty Fallen

Introduction

In 1540 the prospects for Lutheranism in King Henry's England were wrecked.

The single most dramatic event of the year was the downfall of Thomas Cromwell, the chief architect of the Lutheran policy. Though this story has been told many times, it still remains a complex political jigsaw puzzle with key pieces frustratingly missing. He had apparently survived the king's dislike of Queen Anne, and was made Earl of Essex in April 1540; but in June he was suddenly arrested, attainted for treason and heresy, then executed at the end of July.[1]

Two days later Robert Barnes, Thomas Garrett and William Jerome – three of Cromwell's Lutheran allies, also attainted for heresy – suffered death by fire. Neither Barnes, nor the sheriff overseeing the execution, nor his contemporaries knew why he was condemned. Richard Hilles, writing to Henry Bullinger a year later, confessed that despite making 'diligent enquiry' he was unable to uncover the reason, or understand why these three were exempt from the general pardon of July 1540.[2]

The deeper we wade, the murkier the waters become. The Attainder charged them with 'heresies too numerous to mention', but only one issue landed Barnes in trouble and that was justification, a subject on which there was supposed to be agreement, according to Henry that January.[3] Then why should Cranmer and the other Reformers in the council and parliament have connived so tamely in the deaths of three of their own kind? Two years earlier

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[1] For Historiography, see Introduction, pp.12-13.

in the Bishops' Book, Cranmer was preaching 'faith alone' to Henry, and he had also spoken well of Garrett, commending him for St. Peter's Church in Calais. Also, in the action against Barnes, acording to Jeremy Collier, 'it appears that parliament had, for once, taken the cognisance of religious belief from the Bishops' courts and made themselves judges of heresy'. Stanford Lehmberg adds that these were 'the only attainders for heresy in the history of the realm'.[4]

The main arguments of this chapter are these. Something happened in early 1540 to dash Henry's delusion that he and the Lutherans were agreed on justification. This unpleasant discovery, and his lust for Catherine Howard, made Henry abandon his Lutheran policy, resulting in the downfall of Comwell and the death of the three Lutheran activists. The need to cover up Henry's blunder on justification explains much of the secrecy, illegality and underhand methods used against Cromwell and his supporters.

The narrative will trace the events of 1540 broadly chronologically, gathering evidence as it goes along and then analysing it. But first a word is required on the key players in the drama. Henry and Cromwell need no introductions, but the others have not featured much in this study so far.

Robert Barnes was no stranger to religious controversy. He was in trouble for heresy in Wolsey's time, and had to recant and carry the faggot. Believing that the authorities wanted to kill him, he escaped to Antwerp and then to Wittenberg, where he became a fully fledged Lutheran. Thomas

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[2] Foxe 5 p.435; *OL* 1, pp.209-11.
[3] See Chapter 2, p.136.
[4] Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, p.310; J. Collier, *An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, 2 vols. (London, 1708-14) vol. 2, Book 3, p.183; S. Lehmberg, *The Later Parliaments of Henry VIII, 1536-1547* (Cambridge, 1977), p.270. (Though accusations of heresy were included on the attainder of Cromwell).

Garrett had also been in prison in 1526 for having and selling Tyndale's New Testament and Luther's books, as well as holding heretical opinions himself, including justification by faith alone. Little is known about Jerome except that he was vicar of Stepney, where Cromwell lived, and a man of similar views. The Lutheran credentials of all three men were apparently impeccable; as well as preaching *sola fides* Barnes stoutly defended the real presence. 'Meddle as little as you can', warned Tyndale to Frith the Sacramentary who denied it, for Barnes 'will be hot against you' – and he was.[5]

The reforms of the 1530s and the licence to Protestant preachers had not gone entirely unopposed. Traditionalists blamed Reformers for causing division in religion, and especially 'that false knave and heretic Dr. Barnes', fulminated the irate curate of Harwich, Sir Thomas Corthop. But Barnes enjoyed the patronage and support of Cromwell, and could preach virtually unhindered. Among Reformers his reputation ran high. 'Surely he is alone in handling a piece of Scripture, and in setting forth of Christ he has no fellow', commended Latimer in a letter to Cromwell. 'The word is powerfully preached by one Barnes and his fellow ministers', wrote John Butler to Henry Bullinger in February 1540. Butler later had to report that 'three of our best ministers are in the Tower'. This judgement was endorsed by non-Lutherans like the French ambassador Marillac, who wrote to Montmorency about this 'great doctor of the law called Barnes, principal preacher of these new doctrines'.[6]

Robert Barnes was the most active and able Lutheran preacher in England. He had become broadly acceptable in the more favourable religious

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[5] Foxe 5, pp.415-429; W. Tyndale, *Expositions and Notes on Sundry Portions of Holy Scriptures, together with the Practice of Prelates*, ed. H. Walter (PS, 1849) p.435.
[6] *LP* 9.1059; H. Latimer, *Sermons and Remains*, ed. G.E. Corrie (PS, 1845), p.389; *OL* 2, pp.627, 632; *LP* 15.306, 485.

climate of the 1530s. With Henry's blessing, Barnes took part in the Anglo-Lutheran discussions of 1535-36 in Germany, and those of 1538 in England.[7] At the beginning of 1540, therefore, he had no reason to fear danger.

Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, was a highly gifted lawyer and linguist, perhaps more expert in canon law than theology. Like many Catholic humanists of his generation, he was influenced by Erasmus. He had impressed Wolsey, who, in February 1528, sent him and Edward Foxe as envoys to Rome to negotiate the king's divorce. He was loyal to Henry, but incurred some kingly displeasure by arguing a little too strongly for the clergy's independence, though later he fully accepted the Royal Supremacy. His treatise on obedience – '*De Vera Obedientia*' – written in the summer of 1535, argued from Scripture and reason that princes were lords and masters and should be obeyed. [8] Along with Tunstall and other traditionalists, Gardiner probably felt that so long as Henry was king, the Catholic faith would be safe even without the papacy. From 1536-38, the most promising period for the progress of Reform in England, Gardiner was in France as Henry's ambassador there.

As a defender of the old religion, Gardiner never doubted that burning heretics was the right thing to do. This would not necessarily make him a rabid persecutor, however. It all depended on the standing of his opponent. The Sacramentarian John Frith was a former scholar of Gardiner's at Cambridge, and when in 1532 Frith was examined for heresy, Gardiner was one of the commissioners appointed to examine him. At one point Gardiner made a surprise move by inviting Frith to his home to see if he could

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[7] N. Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans* (Concordia, 1965), pp.141-150.

persuade him to repentance by a more personal, persuasive approach.[9] Against a more formidable opponent in government, of course, Gardiner might be less inclined to mercy.

This bishop was also shrewd and clever. When he first heard of the Anglo-German discussions, and that Henry had been invited to join the Schmalkaldic League on condition that he accepted the Augsburg Confession, his reaction was typical. Instead of delivering a blast against heresy he suggested that such alliance might be inappropriate for England because Henry was a king, while the electors were only 'dukes and lower degrees' under the emperor.[10] So the bishop was an astute operator, but not necessarily a particularly bloodthirsty man who relished hounding his opponents to death. These points may be quite relevant to the story that follows.

Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, one of the leading traditionalists in England, has been memorably described by Professor Elton as 'one of the most unpleasant characters in an age which abounded in them'.[11] A recent biographer, David Head, calls him 'a man of great pride, enormous ambition and little inhibition'; and whilst his book is not intended as a deliberate hatchet job, he does admit that 'there is little evidence that he was loved by anyone'. This would appear to include even his wife, who was provoked by his harsh and ungenerous treatment to seek help from his great enemy, Cromwell.

Norfolk deeply resented the rise of the humbly born Vice-Gerent. A

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[8] G. Redworth, *In Defence of the Church Catholic: Life of Stephen Gardiner* (Oxford, 1990), pp.30-70.
[9] Ibid, pp.54-55; *LP* 7.1606.
[10] *Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. J.A.Muller (Cambridge, 1933), pp.72, 75.
[11] G.R. Elton, 'Thomas Cromwell's Decline and Fall', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 10 (1951), p.153.

distinguished soldier, he played a major part in supressing the northern risings associated with the Pilgrimage of Grace. After Jane Seymour's death he favoured the idea of a French bride for Henry and led an embassy to France, though without success.[12]

One other point has to be cleared up before going further. Though Henry's marriage to Anne of Cleves was Cromwell's idea as part of his attempt to cement the Anglo-German policy, he could hardly have forced his king into the contract entirely against his will. It was not a *fait accompli*. Henry supported the match, and was informed of developments at every step. Portraits of Anne were sent to him, and he looked forward eagerly to meeting her. When he saw her in the flesh he liked her not, but he did not blame Cromwell straightaway. In the spring of 1540, therefore, Cromwell was in no immediate threat due to Henry's disappointment with Anne.[13]

Part 1: Narrative

A Lenten Controversy

The action begins in Lent, 1540. Barnes, Garrett and Jerome were among those appointed by Bishop Bonner of London to preach at Paul's Cross, to 'oblige Cromwell', according to Jeremy Collier. Barnes was to speak on the first Sunday in Lent. Before that Gardiner, at the Lord Chamberlain's request, preached in the presence of the king on the first Friday. Gardiner hoped to speak on one of the Sundays as well, so next morning he sent his chaplain to arrange a suitable date. He was not expecting (so he claimed) to be in the

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[12] D. Head, *Ebbs and Flows of Fortune: Life of Thomas Howard, Third Duke of Norfolk* (Athens, Georgia, 1995), pp.2, 12, 130, 136-48, 150, 153-54.

pulpit on the morrow (the first Sunday). The enterprising chaplain, however, did succeed in booking the first Sunday for his bishop in place of Barnes, on the grounds that it was better to elbow Barnes aside than some good Catholic man. At five o'clock that Saturday he told his bishop what he had done. Quite how a chaplain could alter preaching arrangements on his own initiative so quickly, and how the bishop managed to prepare so crucial a sermon at such short notice, makes us suspect that someone was pulling some clerical strings somewhere. Actually the dean of St. Paul's, Bishop Sampson of Chichester, happened to be a close ally of Gardiner's.[14.]

Gardiner's sermon took the gospel for the day, Satan's three temptations of Christ. Gardiner was especially interested in the one where Satan led Jesus to the top of the temple and dared Him, if He really were God's Son, to cast Himself down, because the Scripture promised that 'He shall give His angels charge concerning thee', and no harm would befall Him. This was Gardiner's cue to attack the current Protestant abuse of Scripture:

> 'Now a days the devil tempteth the world and biddeth them cast themselves backward. There is no forward in the new teaching, but all backward. Now the devil teacheth, come back from fasting, come back from praying, come back from confession, come back from weeping for thy sins, and all is backward, in so much as he must learn to say his

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[13] G. R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation* (London, 1977), p.289; Head, *Norfolk*, p.164; J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London, 1968), pp.369-371, 374-75.
[14] Collier, *Ecclesiastical History* 2, Book 3, p.182; Foxe 5, p.430; Gardiner, *Letters*, p.168-69; Redworth, *Life of Stephen Gardiner*, pp.107-109. Redworth suggests that Henry may have had a hand in the choice of Gardiner to preach on the Friday, because favouring Gardiner would serve as a timely reminder to Cromwell that the king had other servants he could call upon if the Lutheran alliance failed. Elton also believes that Gardiner effectively issued the challenge to Barnes, see *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government* (Cambridge UP, 1974), I, p.214; *Reform & Reformation*, pp.289-90.

Pater Noster backward, and where we said, 'forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,' now it is, 'as thou forgivest our debts, so I will forgive my debtors,' and *so God must forgive first'*. (Emphasis mine, for this goes right to the heart of the justification argument.)

This, Gardiner continued, was the devil's cunning, 'to have man idle and void of good works', to live on earth in pleasure and still get into heaven. In former times the devil used to 'procure out pardons from Rome, wherein heaven was sold for a little money, and for to retail that merchandise the devil used friars for his ministers'. Now the friars are gone 'with all their trumpery', but the devil is with us still, though he has changed his tune. Knowing that heaven can no longer be bought and sold, he offers it for nothing. Entry into heaven, according to this new doctrine, 'needs no works at all, but only belief, only, only, nothing else'.[15]

Especially noteworthy is the fact that by attacking popish friars and Rome's pardons as well as the new preachers, Gardiner was cleverly distancing himself from any taint of popery. This sermon was obviously intended for Henry's ear as much as his audience.[16]

Two weeks later, on the 29th February, Robert Barnes ascended the pulpit, and rose to the bait. He agreed that God commands us to forgive others; nevertheless, 'whatever is not of faith is sin', and 'without faith it is impossible to please God'. Therefore we cannot truly forgive anyone until God

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[15] Gardiner, *Letters*, pp.168-170; Foxe 5, pp.430-31; Scripture texts: Matthew 4.5-7; Luke 4.9-12.

[16] However, he continued this line in Edward's reign, rejecting both those 'that speak of creeping to heaven at leisure with their good deeds, and those who would fly to heaven suddenly with their 'only faith' for ease of carriage'. Gardiner, *Letters*, p.344. Further examples on pp.305, 335, 339-41, 344-46, 361-65, 381-83, 403, 407, 420-21.

has first forgiven us, and to pretend otherwise is sin and hypocrisy. Only by faith can God's commands be kept, and only those already justified by faith are able to keep them. Such was the gist of his message, plus a touch of personal invective against Gardiner.[17] It was received with 'almost universal enthusiasm', according to Bartholomew Traheron's letter to Bullinger.[18] But not in Henry's court.

When Henry heard about it he summoned Barnes and Gardiner to him. Instantly he took Gardiner's side. Barnes then offered to yield to the king. 'Yield thee not to me; I am a mortal man', replied Henry. Then, turning to the Sacrament, he said, 'Yonder is Master of us all, Author of truth: yield in truth to Him, and that truth I will defend'. It was agreed that Barnes and Gardiner should confer together. According to Gardiner the two men talked for some hours until at length Barnes, unable to answer him, humbly sought his forgiveness. We have only Gardiner's account for this, and Foxe for one did not believe a word of it; Gardiner was merely 'crowing up his triumph' with this 'glorious tale'. Foxe also rubbished Gardiner's claim that he magnanimously offered Barnes forty pounds a year out of his own living and offered to make him his companion. Nevertheless, some sort of climbdown must have occurred – probably a strategic withdrawal in the face of overwhelming odds – and Barnes, like Garrett and Jerome who had both preached in similar vein, were commanded by Henry to recant.[19]

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[17] Foxe 5, p.431; Collier, *Ecclesiastical History* 2, p.182; Romans14.23; Hebrews11.6.
[18] *OL* 1, pp.316-17.
[19] Gardiner, *Letters*, p.172-73; Foxe 5, pp.431-32. Jerome had a different text but essentially the same message on justification. He added that 'no magistrate hath power to make that thing which of itself is indifferent to be not indifferent', which Gardiner attributed to the influence of Barnes, Foxe 5, App.8; *LP* 15.345, 411(2), 414. Lutherans held that human institutions are not binding on consciences, but that does not mean that all human institutions are wrong. In the conspiratorial climate of Lent 1540, however, this could be turned into an attack on the Royal Supremacy itself.

The nub of the matter is this. The disputed words came from the Lord's prayer and the Sermon on the Mount: 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,.....For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive yours'.[20] If, therefore, in order to be justified, we must forgive our neighbour first, and only then will God forgive us, then plainly justification cannot be by faith *alone*. Instead it must be by faith in God *and* charity towards others. This was the Catholic line, in the Articles that Gardiner drew up against Barnes. The effect of Christ's passion has a condition, argued Gardiner, and to fulfil this condition, faith is required. Faith is a gift of God, which enables us to do well *before* we are justified. So justification is attained by faith and charity, not faith alone. Faith is the 'assurance of the promises of God in Christ if I fulfil the condition, and love must accomplish the condition: whereupon followeth the attainment of the promise according to God's truth'. Therefore even someone 'in deadly sin may have grace to do works of penance, whereby he may attain to his justification'.[21]

So according to Gardiner, faith is essential for justification, because without it the 'condition' will remain forever unfulfilled. Nevertheless faith must be perfected, or made complete, by charity, and until it is, justification is not fully attained. The Lutheran Gospel of course rejected any such 'condition'; at the moment of conversion the believer was freely justified by faith and accounted righteous for Christ's sake. Good fruits and good works should

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[20] Matthew 6.14-15. Also Mark 11.26.
[21] Foxe 5, pp.432-3.

follow of course, one of which is a willingness to forgive others as we have been forgiven.

So the real significance of this controversy is that Barnes' sermon was mainstream Lutheranism. Gardiner was not attacking Barnes personally, or preachers on the radical fringe. He was going instead for the Lutheran jugular. His sermon launched a concerted anti-Lutheran drive, and it stands to reason that he satisfied himself in advance that Henry would agree with him, not Barnes.[22] Further, this clash between Barnes and Gardiner must have jolted Henry. For the king, that Lent was a rude awakening; it proved that he and the Lutherans were not agreed on justification after all. Suddenly Henry awoke to the startling fact that for years he had been pursuing a religious policy with those whose central doctrine he intensely disliked.

Until now the Lutheran and Henrician views on Justification might be compared to two distinctive mountain peaks, which, when viewed from a distance, appear near enough to be part of the same massive, and not until we move closer does the gap between them open up. For Henry, this was what the Barnes-Gardiner jousting did. Suddenly the issue was brought into sharp focus, and could no longer be fudged by a polished compromise along the lines of the Ten Articles. It was all very well to say that justification comes

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[22] See quotes from *Apology* in Chapter 3, pp.147-52. See also *Apology*, Article 4, on Christ's words, 'If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you' - 'Here a work is required, and the promise of the remission of sins is added which does not occur on account of the work, but through faith, on account of Christ' (Internet, part 8, Continuation of Reply to the Arguments, Tappert, p.148.272, *BSLK*, p.214.272). Also from the *Apology* (though a variant reading), 'For our forgiving is not a good work, except it is performed by a person whose sins have been previously forgiven by God in Christ. If, therefore, our forgiving is to please God, it must follow after the forgiveness that God extends to us' (Article 4, Internet part 8, *BSLK*, p.213.15-35). This passage is not included in Tappert, and appears in *BSLK* in German only. But variant or not, it is the standard Lutheran line, and Barnes' sermon is identical. See also Luther's Catechisms on the Lord's Prayer – 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us' – Tappert, pp.347.15-16, pp. 432-33, *BSLK*, pp.514.15-16, pp.682-85.

by 'faith joined with charity', and that good works were 'necessary to salvation'. Lutherans and Henrician Catholics could and did agree – at least on the words. But all depended on how the words were understood. For instance, *how* were faith and charity joined? And in what sense was charity necessary: as a cause (or joint-cause) of justification (the Henrician view) or a consequence (the Melanchthonian)? Here we are down to the fine detail and the hard questions. Does justification occur immediately when we first believe; or is there a sort of probationary period during which good works are required, and which must be fulfilled satisfactorily before justification is completed and confirmed? And what exactly is this faith, and when does this charity, which both sides admit is essential, really begin? Barnes and Gardiner each knew his own position. Now Henry was forced to declare where he stood – and it was emphatically on Catholic ground. If Henry did not realise the full significance immediately, we can be sure that sooner or later Gardiner tactfully and respectfully clarified things to his satisfaction.

Moreover, it is highly likely that Gardiner had a bigger fish than Barnes in his sights. Cromwell was the uncrowned champion of Reform in England, and Barnes was one of Cromwell's closest supporters. It was even reported that Cromwell had earlier managed to get Gardiner off the Privy Council for calling Barnes a 'heretic'.[23]

So the Bishop of Winchester's Lenten sermon was an exceedingly skilful, opportunist strike. However, it does not follow that Cromwell's fall was planned during Lent by Gardiner and Norfolk. The duke was not involved in scheduling sermons at Paul's Cross (in fact in February he was on a

diplomatic mission in France).[24] Nor does it prove that Gardiner was bent on pursuing Barnes to the stake and Cromwell to the scaffold. Gardiner's main aim was to open Henry's eyes and turn him against the Lutheran policy. He was doing his formidable best in the defence of the old religion, seizing opportunities as and when they arose. As far as his opponents were concerned, he might have been content to see Barnes confined somewhere or maybe packed off to Wittenberg, and Cromwell still in the Council but with reduced influence, certainly in matters spiritual.

Meanwhile Henry ordered Barnes and his friends to recant publicly during Easter. Ominously, he ordered that a report should be made to him personally of the recantations.[25]

Jerome, Barnes and Garrett recanted on the 29th, 30th and 31st of March respectively. Marillac, relating the episode to King Francis, said that Barnes 'showed by his speech that he did it more to satisfy the king than for any change of opinion'. Then each man effectively repudiated his recantation by following it up with another sermon on how faith alone justifies. Hardly surprisingly, three days later all were in the Tower. This was by order of the Council, according to Gardiner, to which he had no access because he was not a member 'so long as Cromwell's time lasted'. (Whether the Council issued the order or not, it seems virtually certain that their imprisonment was the king's will.) Their subsequent fate, Gardiner went on, was determined 'by the whole realm, whereunto I was privy, but among the rest'. Foxe predictably dismisses Gardiner's plea of innocence, alleging that by 'his privy complaining

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[23] *LP* 14 (2) 750.1 p.279.
[24] *LP* 15.233.
[25] Gardiner, *Letters*, p.174.

..... and secret whisperings' and other devious means Gardiner was working to send Barnes to the fire.[26]

It is not clear why Barnes so flagrantly disobeyed the king, though Alec Ryrie has described a culture of recantation common in the later years of Henry's reign, when often it became more a negotiating ploy than a real change of heart.[27] Traditionally most of those accused of heresy (mainly Lollards) did recant, with the result that until Mary's reign England witnessed many heresy trials but not too many executions. But at this stage no heresy charges had been brought against Barnes, and due to the carefully constructed ambiguity of Ten Articles it would not have been easy to prove that he had preached anything contrary to law or the king's proclamations. So he probably felt safe, especially with Cromwell still in power. But Barnes had underestimated the danger. If the recantations were as insincere as observers said they were, then they could be taken by Henry as an act of defiance; for not only had the Lutherans carried on preaching 'faith alone', they had also implicitly rejected the king's right to arbitrate in matters of religion, effectively denying that Henry was 'Defender of the Faith'.

The Calm and the Storm

Hitherto Reformers who got into trouble, unless they were overt Sacramentaries, could rely on Cromwell to bail them out. But times had changed, and following Gardiner's resurgence and the king's failed marriage, Cromwell was not as impregnable as before. There was little he could do

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[26] Foxe 5, pp.433-34; Gardiner, *Letters*, pp.173-74; Redworth, *Life of Gardiner*, p.115; *LP* 15.485.
[27] A. Ryrie, 'English Evangelical Reformers in the Last Years of Henry VIII' (Oxford D.Phil., 2000), pp.100-122.

offensively, but fortunately at this stage Barnes' life was not in any immediate danger. Most likely he would be detained for a time like Latimer after the Six Articles, but nothing worse.

Cromwell's response was diplomatic. He invited Gardiner to dine with him. The two men then 'opened their hearts' one to another, with the result that 'all displeasures are forgotten', and 'they be now perfect friends' – this according to Sir John Wallop in a letter to Lord Lisle.[28] (The time-honoured handshake before the heavyweight title bout might be more like it.) The outward bonhomie was probably for Henry's benefit. Doubtless Cromwell hoped that the dinner and the recantations would smooth things over. He must have realised how bad things were from the Lutheran point of view, and the need to be circumspect. According to Marillac he was now 'tottering', weakened by the Barnes-Gardiner clash and Barnes' confinement in the Tower; he and Cranmer 'do not know where they are', and reports were rife that Tunstall might be made Vicar-general in his place.[29]

Meanwhile on the 12th of April Parliament opened with speeches from Chancellor Audley and Cromwell. Cromwell stressed the king's desire for unity in religion, lamenting the 'rashness and licentiousness of some, and the inveterate superstition and stiffness of others in the ancient corruptions'. (The second group of course were Papists, but the first was another by now

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[28] *LP* 15.429. Wallop's letter is dated 31 March, but the date of this dinner is uncertain. It was either before the recantations, or at least before anyone in power heard that they were all made as a bit of a joke. See M. St. C. Byrne (ed.), *Lisle Letters*, 6 vols. (Chicago, 1981) vol. 6, p.59. It was not the first time that Cromwell had initiated peace talks with Gardiner. In April 1538 he sent the bishop a conciliatory letter to try and end the coolness between the two on another, unrelated matter – see R. Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1902) 2, p.136. Maybe Cromwell decided to give diplomacy one more chance.

[29] *LP* 15.486. Merriman assumed, on 'internal evidence', that Cromwell apologised to Gardiner, though he admitted that no record exists. Merriman, *Life and Letters of Cromwell* 1, p.288-89. Gardiner's *Letters* do not even hint at such a thing. Cromwell was sufficiently skilled in diplomacy to know how to mend fences without a formal *Apology*.

familiar piece of Cromwellian vagueness, deliberately leaving the hearers unsure whether Sacramentarians or Lutherans like Barnes were meant.) The King, Cromwell continued, 'leaned neither to the right hand nor to the left', but sought only the 'pure and sincere doctrine of the Christian faith'. To this end he appointed a committee of bishops and divines to complete the *Institution of a Christian Man*, and another one to examine what religious ceremonies should be retained.[30]

Then on April the 18th Cromwell was made Earl of Essex and Lord Great Chamberlain, a hereditary office of the de Vere Earls of Oxford, whose family had Howard connections. Suddenly Cromwell was 'in as much favour with his master as he ever was, from which he was near being shaken by the bishop of Winchester and others', reported a surprised Marillac.[31] It seems that Cromwell's show of unity with Gardiner, and his emphasis on avoiding extremes in his address to parliament – if not the sole reason for his new honour – had impressed Henry, or at least deflected any danger. Of course a Tudor ennoblement carried no immunity from the axe: Henry made More his Chancellor, knowing all the while what a devout son of the Roman church he was.

The parliamentary committee set up to deal with the *Institution* had an emphatic Catholic majority, with only three out of twenty – Cranmer, Richard Cox and Bishop Barlow of St. David's – being committed Reformers. Cromwell was not personally on the committees, and there were also secular affairs for him to attend to. About the only one of real interest here was the subsidy. Cromwell had to persuade the Commons that Henry needed money

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[30] Burnet 1, p.437-439; Lehmberg, *Later Parliaments*, pp.85, 90-91.

for the defence of both the gospel and the country. Cromwell's case was that under Henry England enjoyed peace, safety and prosperity, and even more important, deliverance from pope, his idolatry and superstition. Grateful subjects, therefore, would surely not refuse this request. Necessary royal expenses included putting down the Pilgrimage of Grace rebellion, the defence fortifications of 1539 when danger threatened, the cost of councils in the North and West, repairing Westminster Hall, and maintaining the army in Ireland.[32]

The outcome was a most satisfying one for both Cromwell and Henry. The only dissenting voice was Tunstall's, who felt that the tax should not be imposed on the clergy, though he dropped his objection when it was pointed out that the clergy had contributed to previous taxes. The subsidy bill was accepted by Commons on the 1st of May and soon after by Lords. As this tax was 'larger than any paid earlier in the sixteenth century' (according to Lehmberg), and moreover levied at a time when England was neither at nor preparing for war, it is not surprising that Henry made a point of thanking parliament for granting it. Marillac, too, was impressed. On the 8th of May he told King Francis that Henry might get most of the money he wanted, and then on the 21st he reported that he had got all of it 'without contradiction'. Other secular business also went well, leaving religious matters the only problem, with the bishops in their customary state of almost complete disagreement on doctrine.[33]

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[31] *LP* 15.541, 567; Elton, 'Thomas Cromwell's Decline & Fall', p.174; Head, *Norfolk*, p170. Whether this was an intended snub to Norfolk is uncertain; it could be taken that way.
[32] Lehmberg, *Later Parliaments*, pp.91-95; *LP* 15.502.
[33] Ibid, pp.94-95, 103; *LP* 15.651, 697.

So the spring of 1540 saw Cromwell being his usual efficient self in administration. Even Henry, though he probably thought that his subjects owed him whatever he asked for, must have been impressed by his chief minister. It is true that Henry's parliaments were more obliging and compliant than those of, say, Charles I, and, had it been necessary, Cromwell had ways of persuading the Commons if it gave trouble. But according to the evidence the need for strong-arm tactics never arose. Raising money has never been popular, especially in peacetime, but what is especially interesting is the reason Cromwell gave – primarily to keep England safe from popery.

Cromwell's policy in parliament may have been part of a wider strategy. The popish spectre had already arisen that year in Calais, centring on Sir Gregory Botolf, one of three domestic chaplains to Lord Lisle, the Calais deputy. Under the pretence of going to England in February 1540, Botolf set off for Rome via France, to offer his services to the pope and Cardinal Pole. His plan was to betray Calais into their hands. He was back in Calais on the 17th March. Unfortunately for him his conspiracy soon came to light thanks to one Philpot, at first a confidant of Botolf, who panicked and confessed to the authorities. On the 8th of April investigations began, and a report was sent to Henry and Cromwell on 13th and 14th respectively.[34]

On the 24th Lord Lisle was in London, and met Cromwell at the Garter Feast on the 9th of May. Then in an apparently unrelated incident about that time (the exact date is uncertain) Richard Farmer, one of London's wealthiest merchants, was imprisoned for life because his chaplain, already in jail, had maintained the authority of the pope. More seriously on the 19th of May Lord

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[34] *Lisle Letters* 6, pp.53-121, especially pp.56, 74, 87, 96-98, 102; *LP* 15.478.

Lisle was arrested and accused of 'secret intelligence with Cardinal Pole, his near relation, and of certain practices to deliver the town of Calais to Pole', according to Marillac. Marillac understood that 'another great personage' would soon be taken, though he did not know either the name or cause 'except that all accusations here are called treason'. Though Henry thought that Lisle had probably erred through ignorance rather than malice, he was taking no chances. Henry was very sensitive to popish conspiracy theories, especially at Calais. (Fears of an anti-English alliance of Charles V, Francis 1 and the pope, and even the risk of invasion were high as recently as 1538. The danger soon passed, but while it lasted Calais was placed on almost a war footing.)[35]

Meanwhile Ambassador Marillac had learned from certain of Henry's ministers that a book was about to be issued (presumably the revised *Institution*) which would rather grandiosely 'determine all that is to be held in religion'. Its confessional line would be '*not according to the doctrines of the Germans or of the pope, but of the ancient councils of the church*, by which the king shall be known, and known to Francis, as a searcher and lover of truth only' (Emphasis mine). A tract had been sent by Elector John Frederick from Germany in response to the Six Articles – defending yet again the Lutheran view on communion in one kind, private masses, clerical celibacy and vows – but 'it is thought their request will have little effect, and it is even said publicly that the said pamphlet contains several erroneous doctrines'. It was hoped that the *Institution* would be ready by Whitsunday – the 16th of

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[35] *LP* 15.697, 804, p.378, 1005; *Lisle Letters* 6, pp.116-18; 5, pp.352-53.

May 1540 – but because the bishops had failed to settle the religious disputes in time, Henry decided to prorogue parliament until the 25th.[36]

However, religion was not the only subject on Henry's mind and heart during the month of May. Though still legally married to Anne he was now 'much taken with another young lady' whom he was visiting frequently by day and by night. So wrote Richard Hilles to Henry Bullinger, and he was hardly the only one to know of Henry's affair of the heart with Catherine Howard, niece of the duke of Norfolk. Gardiner, Hilles continued, has been 'providing feastings and entertainments' for the ageing though amorous Henry and his child sweetheart at his palace.[37]

One effect of the bishops' 'contention about doctrine' was that the Barnes affair remained unresolved.[38] A letter from Barnes to John Aepinus dated the 21st of May gives some idea of how things now stood with him. First he warned that it was unsafe for Melanchthon to come to England, at least for the time being, 'for I have been deceived myself', he added, not saying in what or by whom. He went on to describe the 'fierce controversy' between himself and Gardiner 'respecting justification by faith and purgatory'. According to Barnes, the bishop argued that 'the blood of Christ cleanseth only from past sins previous to baptism, but that those committed since are blotted out partly by the merits of Christ and partly by our own satisfactions', and that voluntary works are superior to the Ten Commandments. As for purgatory, Gardiner claimed that 'if a woman shall have caused masses to be said for the soul of her husband, she may boldly demand his soul in the day of judgement, and say that she has paid the price of his redemption'. As these

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[36] *LP* 15.310, 697; Lehmberg, *Later Parliaments*, pp.102-103.

points are not found in either Gardiner's or Foxe's account of the Lenten controversy, it seems that this issue had been rumbling on through summer. Barnes added that he was fighting a lone battle because only Latimer would stand up for him, though many others agreed with him.[39] This is rather puzzling, since Garrett and Jerome were already in the Tower, and Latimer was still in detention for opposing the Six Articles. Probably Barnes was unaware of all that was happening outside. As Barnes was not yet arraigned, it is also likely that Cromwell was using his influence as Vice-Gerent to block any legal proceedings against him.

So apart from rumours and gossip about Henry and Catherine Howard, the months of April and May were fairly commonplace. Parliamentary business went through smoothly, the bishops bickered about doctrine, while a few isolated claims of popish plots were hardly enough to trouble the peace of the realm. Or so it seemed until suddenly, at the end of May, Bishop Sampson of Chichester and Dr. Wilson, a chaplain to the king, were arrested on suspicion of secret communications with Rome. This strike against a prominent traditionalist bishop left the others 'in great trouble, some for fear of being found guilty of the same deed, and some for the differences they have upon some religious questions, as each party to establish what they maintain would destroy those who sustain the contrary'. (Again Marillac is the witness.) A climate of mistrust was pervading London, and 'every day new accusations are discovered'. An unidentified but 'trustworthy personage' has quoted Cromwell as saying that five other bishops ought to be treated the same way as Sampson. (Marillac mentioned no names, but Tunstall and Gardiner were

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[37] *OL*.1, pp.201-202.

surely among them.) Marillac has also heard that Barnes will soon be released, and Latimer made bishop again – 'so great is the inconstancy of the English'. The bishops were still locked in 'irreconcilable division' and the people hardly knew what to believe. Meanwhile Cranmer had preached a sermon at Paul's Cross quite contrary to the one Gardiner gave there in Lent, which sparked off the Barnes trouble.[40]

The details are unclear, but the overall picture is not. Cromwell's Reformation party had fought back strongly since Gardiner's missile nearly torpedoed it three months earlier. Certainly Sampson's prospects looked bleak. When Ralph Sadler told Henry that Sampson had denied the charges against him, Henry 'liked both him and the matter the worse, perceiving by the examinations that there were witnesses sufficient to condemn him'.[41]

Cromwell then sent Dr. Petre and Mr. Bellows to question Sampson about alleged conversations he had with Tunstall and Gardiner. On the 7th of June Sampson wrote to Cromwell with his version of what was said. Cromwell's men told Sampson that Tunstall had denied urging him to 'lean and stick to the old usages and traditions of the church'. Sampson was surprised to hear this; he claimed Tunstall and the late bishop of London were 'fully bent to maintain as many of the old usages and traditions as they might'. One special point was 'praying for souls, and that by prayers they be delivered from their pains'. (Actually this was safe under the last of the Ten Articles on purgatory.) Sampson was questioned about Gardiner too, but there was nothing incriminating on him. Gardiner's had said only that

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[38] *LP* 15.566.
[39] *OL* 2, p.616. What kind of 'voluntary works' is not specified.
[40] *LP* 15.736-737.
[41] *LP* 15.719.

ceremonies 'were not to be broken without a great cause; and some of them were in no wise to be broken'. This apart, Gardiner had diplomatically advised Sampson to leave the matter of ceremonies to the king.[42]

So Sampson was in jail, and inquiries were being made about Tunstall. Cromwell's men had obviously spoken to him, and maybe he was now wishing he had not murmured against taxing the clergy in parliament.[43] There was nothing to incriminate Gardiner – yet. Cromwell's exact intentions in all of this are unclear, but there was certainly reason to believe that he was preparing an assault on the bishops, with Sampson merely the first step to Tunstall, Gardiner and maybe others too.

Cromwell's policy towards senior Catholics like Norfolk and Gardiner during the 1530s was mainly to keep them out of power and away from court and the king as far he could, rather than to destroy them.[44] But since then Cromwell had had to endure the act of Six Articles, the confinement of Latimer and Barnes, and now not only the resurgence of Gardiner, but Henry's love affair with Norfolk's niece as well. For the man in the vanguard of the Reformation in England, all this must have been humiliating and hard to take. The temptation to strike back would be well-nigh irresistible.

Henry, though, was very dependent on both Tunstall and Gardiner. Tunstall had been his specially chosen advisor on the disputed points with the Lutherans, in which Henry had successfully worsted the Germans (or so he felt) and it was thanks to Gardiner that Henry had seen the light on

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[42] J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials under Henry VIII*, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1822) Vol. 1, Part 2, pp.381-82; *LP* 15.758. For the Ten Articles on purgatory, see *English Historical Documents 5, 1485-1558*, ed. C.H. Williams (London, 1967), pp.804-05.
[43] See p.197 above.
[44] Elton, 'Cromwell's Decline & Fall', pp150-160. Gardiner, of course, had been in France for nearly three years, 1536-38.

justification. Whatever Henry felt about Sampson, he could hardly afford to lose the other two, especially having just discovered how far he was from the Lutheran Cromwell in religion. Further, Cromwell was hardly likely to arrange a convenient divorce for Henry so that he could marry Catherine Howard, with all the advantages that would bring to the Catholic Norfolk. Despite all this, Henry knew what an able chief minister Cromwell was. The king was in a dilemma, and we can see how perceptive and true Marillac's paradoxical sounding observation was, that though Cromwell and Gardiner were both in great favour with Henry, things have come to the point where one of them 'must succumb'.[45]

It is not clear whether religion or passion decided the matter. During Sampson's interrogation Cromwell admitted to Sir Thomas Wriothesley that 'one thing rested in his head, which troubled him – that the king liked not the queen, nor did ever like her from the beginning, and that the marriage had not been consummated'. Wriothesley left his own account of his last conversations with Cromwell on the 6th and 7th of June. He felt sure that 'some way might be devised to relieve the king', but Cromwell would only reply that it was a 'great matter'. Next day Wriothesley pressed him again, because if no solution were found then ere long 'they would all smart for it'. 'True', replied Cromwell, but then he merely repeated that it was a 'great matter'. 'Let the remedy be searched for', Wriothesley urged. 'Well', said Cromwell – 'and then brake off from him'.[46]

Almost anything could be read into this enigmatic recollection. Possibly Cromwell sensed that the end was nigh for him, but it is surprising that only

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[45] *LP* 15.737.

one thing troubled him. And that was not the king's infatuation with Catherine Howard. Like Anne Boleyn, she would soon be executed for adultery, and it was scarcely beyond Cromwell's ingenuity to find something on Catherine and damage Norfolk at the same time. Neither did he seem worried by the setback for Reform and detention of Latimer and Barnes, because the prospects for both had improved. But even if Cromwell could destroy the bishops and Norfolk, and set Barnes and Latimer free once more, and reverse the setbacks which the Reformation had suffered, he would still be left with the one thing that troubled him: he could never compel the king to like Queen Anne.

He had been mulling over this dilemma for at least two months. At Easter and again during Whit week at Greenwich, Henry had told Cromwell that Anne was not his lawful wife, and many times since the king had lamented his fate to his Vice-Gerent.[47] Gardiner, as will be clear soon, had a solution prepared.

What Wriothesley did after his converstions with Cromwell – and what flurry of activity there was on the 8th and 9th of June 1540 – is gallingly untraceable. Cromwell was arrested on the 10th, at the Council table on a charge of treason. An exultant Norfolk reproached him for his 'villainies' and snatched off the order of St. George, while the Lord Admiral, the earl of Southampton tore off the garter, thereby showing 'himself as great an enemy in adversity as he had been thought a friend in prosperity'. Then the forner Vice-Gerent was ushered into a barge and rowed to the Tower, entering

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[46] *LP* 15.850(11), p.423.
[47] *LP* 15.823, p.391; 824, p.394.

under the Traitors' gate.[48] As often Marillac is the witness, but this time his evidence is even more unique. Before he was able to finish his report to King Francis a messenger from the court arrived, because Henry wanted him to 'know the truth' about Cromwell's fall. The 'truth' was this:

> 'The substance was that the king, wishing by all possible means to lead back religion to the way of truth, Cromwell, as attached to the German Lutherans, has always favoured the doctors who preached such erroneous opinions and hindered those who preached the contrary; and that recently, warned by some of his principal servants to reflect that he was working against the intention of the king and the acts of parliament, he had betrayed himself and said he hoped to suppress the old preachers and have only the new, adding that the affair would soon be brought to such a pass that the king with all his power could not prevent it, but rather his own party would be so strong that he would make the king descend to the new doctrines even if he had to take arms against him'.[49]

On the same day Marillac wrote to Montmorency, saying how the king's ministers have been pre-occupied with trying to destroy each other; but that Cromwell's party, which lately seemed the stronger, was now quite overthrown by the arrest of its leader. Cranmer was still free, but he 'dare not

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[48] *LP* 15.804.
[49] *LP* 15.766.

open his mouth'. Marillac stressed the suddenness of it: 'The thing is the more marvellous as it was unexpected by everyone'.[50]

The drama of June the 10th did not end with Cromwell's arrival in the Tower. The King's archers were soon at his house taking an inventory of everything he had, and some valuables were carried off to King's treasury.[51] Then the news was announced to parliament and the European envoys. Whereas Henry had ever sought to establish good order in religion for the glory of God, so the official version ran, Cromwell had been 'secretly and indirectly' acting contrary to the king's will. He had said – and this has been 'justified to his face by good witnesses' – that 'if the King and all the realm would turn and vary from his opinions, he would fight in the field in his own person with his sword in his hand'. Furthermore, Cromwell had hoped in another year or two to 'bring things to the frame that the king could not resist it'. For this treason and 'other great enormities' Cromwell had been committed to Tower.[52]

One who heard this was Richard Pate in Bruges. Pate wrote to Henry, appropriately shocked that Cromwell could be minded to 'pluck the sword' from the hand of the king his benefactor. Cromwell should never have involved himself with religion and tried to disturb the people with 'false doctrine' which 'condemned good works', 'trusted too much in faith' and held that 'charity and the observance of the ten commandments could not be admitted as means to obtain the kingdom of heaven'. Cromwell should have

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[50] *LP* 15.767.
[51] *LP* 15.804.
[52] *SP* 8, pp.349-50; *LP* 15.765.

obeyed his king who had been so patient in dealing with the 'adverse party in religion'.[53]

Because Pate's letter contains nothing about the Sacrament, the 'adverse party' should be the party of acceptable Reformers like Cromwell, Cranmer and their friends – those either Lutheran or near enough. Pate was not referring to the Sacramentarians, because they were arraigned and condemned under Henry, not dealt with patiently. So all this is consistent with Marillac's evidence.

On the day after Cromwell's arrest, the 11th of June, a full house gathered in Parliament hoping for more news, but there was none.[54] Also on the 11th, a search of Cromwell's house discovered several letters that he had written to or received from the Lutheran lords of Germany. Marillac reported this to Montmorency; he did not know the contents, but Henry was now 'so exasperated against him (Cromwell) that he would no longer hear him spoken of, but rather desired to abolish all memory of him, as the greatest wretch ever born in England'.[55]

Truth is the first casualty in war, as the saying goes. No one could go straight from the Tower to the scaffold without some sort of trial, and there was nothing illegal in the 1530s about corresponding with the German electors, or even favouring a German alliance, else Henry would have been a traitor himself. Perhaps the beginnings of an official misinformation campaign can now be detected. For supposing Cromwell had written incriminating letters to Germany, it is rather implausible that he was foolish enough to keep copies of them lying around in his house.

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[53] *SP* 8, p.364; *LP* 15.811.

June the 12th was a day of fairly routine business in Parliament. From the Tower the fallen Vice-Gerent wrote to the king, strongly denying that he was a traitor, and calling the charges against him false. God was his witness that he has not done wrong wilfully; of that none could accuse him. He never said anything 'so high and abominable' (most likely a reference to the 'fight in the field' story). As for those who have witnessed against him: 'Your Grace knows what manner of man Throgmerton has ever been towards me and your proceedings; and what Master Chancellor (Rich) has been to me, God and he knows best; what I have been to him, your majesty knows'. Cromwell had also heard from the Controller that Henry complained about him for revealing a 'matter of great secrecy'. Cromwell knew the matter – it concerned intimate details of Henry's feelings towards Anne – but again he denied revealing it. [56]

The letter was deferential in tone, replete with appeals to the king's grace and mercy, all in the standard flowery, verbose Tudor style. But it was also bold and defiant. It contained a powerful double thrust against Henry: a dutiful appeal for mercy, but also a fearless denial of the charges against him. Cromwell was not about to meekly confess whatever his accusers wanted to hear. Foxe's story that Henry was much moved when the letter was read to him is entirely plausible.[57] Henry was acting against his conscience. He must also have realised that a normal trial would almost certainly fail to secure a conviction. That left only the Attainder.

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[54] Lehmberg, *Later Parliaments*, p.107.
[55] *LP* 15.804.
[56] Lehmberg, *Later Parliaments*, p.107; Merriman, *Life and Letters of Cromwell* 2, p.264; *LP* 15.776; *LP* 15.804.
[57] Foxe 5, pp.401-02. Actually Cromwell wrote more than one letter to Henry from the Tower, and Foxe does not say which one moved Henry this way. This does not alter the point, however; *any* of the letters could have the same effect. For his next letter, see p.218 below.

So far the events leading up to Cromwell's arrest have been traced roughly chronologically, relying much on Marillac, one of the few independent sources available. The next subject is to examine is the real reason for Cromwell's downfall, why it happened when it did, and why Henry was so concerned that Marillac, and through him King Francis, should know the 'truth'.

Part 2: Analysis

Cromwell's Treason

The accusation against Cromwell was *religious* treason; that he had been conspiring by all sorts of means, including force, to make England Lutheran against Henry's wish. Though Henry and Cromwell were united against the papacy, they disagreed on where to go from there. For a time this disagreement hardly mattered, because Henry's attitude to the Lutherans, at least until 1540, was fairly favourable. He was never one of them, but they were better than the Papists and the Sacramentaries. He had supported religious dialogue with them and was prepared, even eager, for a settlement – but it would have to be a negotiated settlement, not full acceptance of the Augsburg Confession. A national 'Patristic church' was Henry's religious goal, and if the Lutherans came on board, he would welcome them. Cromwell, however, wanted a national Lutheran church, which meant that Henry would have to cross over to them. This Henry was determined never to do. So Cromwell's 'treason' consisted in pursuing a religious policy of his own, not the king's. Henry was 'Defender of the Faith' and God's anointed in spiritual

as well as temporal affairs, so trying to establish a faith contrary to the king's would indeed be treason.

But the problem for Cromwell's accusers was that he had an obvious defence to this charge. All England and most of Europe as well knew that he had been the leader of the Reformation party for several years, so if that amounted to treason why was he not arrested long ago? There are two main reasons. First, not until the Barnes-Gardiner clash at Lent did Henry realise that he and the Lutherans were miles apart on justification, and consequently any further agreement on the disputed points was impossible. The Germans were no longer, and really never had been, the potential allies that Henry once hoped they would be. Had it been the case that Henry and the Lutherans *were* agreed on justification – or even if Henry still thought they were agreed – then Cromwell might have received nothing worse than a royal warning not to exceed his brief. But the situation was now quite different: Cromwell stood for a religious and political alliance binding Henry to a doctrinal position that he deeply detested. Thus Cromwell had become a direct threat to Henry as king and head of his – the Henrician – church.

Though not a part of the official charges, there can be little doubt that another reason for his arrest concerned Queen Anne. It was 'commonly said by most persons, and with great probability', according to Richard Hilles, that Cromwell did not support the divorce, and for this he was executed. One man who would know better than most was Stephen Gardiner. In Mary's reign Gardiner reflected on how dangerous it was to 'take a share in the marriage of princes'. He cited Cromwell as an example, who had arranged Henry's marriage to Anne 'because he believed that Germany would ever afterwards

assist this country for her sake; whereas the marriage only lasted one night and ruined Cromwell'. For this reason Gardiner was loath to get involved with marriage plans for Queen Mary.[58]

Cromwell's 'fault', however, was not the marriage itself, but rather the failure to end it. Henry disliked Anne from the day he saw her, but he did not turn against Cromwell straightaway. At least until the justification bombshell he could trust Cromwell to come up with a solution; but then in quick succession came the Lenten controversy and his love affair with Catherine Howard, leaving Henry impatient to be free from his German policy and his German marriage fast. Mindful perhaps of how the Lutherans had opposed his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, he might have feared (or been led to suspect) that Cromwell and Barnes would make trouble if a German queen was similarly treated, and that Cromwell might stand for Anne as More and Fisher did for Catherine.

A clue to the timing of the arrest is that Bishop Sampson's detention was perceived to be the beginning of a Cromwellian purge of prominent Catholic bishops. Had this gone ahead unchecked, the result could have been the near destruction of the Catholic party, and a triumphant Reformation party led by an all powerful Lutheran Vice-Gerent. Henry could scarcely have countenanced such an imbalance of power even in the heady days of 1536 when Melanchthon was dedicating his *Loci* to the king, and Henry was looking forward to seeing Melanchthon personally. But now – now the scales had fallen from his eyes on justification; now that he knew the Lutherans were not religious allies, and never were or would be; now, besotted with Norfolk's

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[58] *OL* 1, p.202; *CSP*, *Span.* 11.339.

niece and desperate to be free from his German wife – in these vastly changed times the prospect of Cromwell holding almost unlimited sway in government and parliament was unthinkable. Even if Henry suspected that there might be something in these popish plot theories, he simply could not allow Cromwell to destroy the opposition.

There is of course no definite proof that Cromwell *was* planning such a purge. But perceptions may carry more weight than hard facts, especially in the court of a suspicious Tudor despot. By now Henry must have been much more wary of Cromwell regarding religion, as well as impatient for a divorce on which Cromwell was stalling. If rumours of a Cromwellian strike against the bishops had reached Marillac, they had almost certainly reached Henry as well, perhaps via Gardiner and Norfolk. It may well be that these two prevailed on Henry to act when he did, for fear that any delay might be too late.

The French Connection

The other question arising from Cromwell's arrest is why Henry was so concerned that King Francis I should know the real reason for it. A brief survey of the Reformation in France is necessary to answer this.

In the 1520s Francis did not always pursue alleged heretics with the rigour that his more conservative clergy wished for. In 1530 Bucer was hopeful that the gospel would succeed in France, though it was not clear exactly which gospel, because the label 'Lutheran' was commonly attached to Protestant dissenters of any kind. Melanchthon was considering an invitation to go to France in 1534, and then the Elector John Frederick made the decision for him by refusing permission. One thing that hardened Francis'

attitude against reform was the 'Affair of the Placards' in October that year. Placards appeared suddenly in public places attacking the mass as a sacrifice and the real presence. Obviously those behind it were Zwinglians and Sacramentarians, though the distinction between them and the Lutherans was not observed either by Francis or the hostile public. Francis himself called the affair the 'matter of the Lutherans'. Arrests and burnings soon followed, and this time Francis made no attempt to stop them until July next year, when he pronounced a general pardon for all religious prisoners and exiles except Sacramentarians. He also began making overtures once more to the German Lutherans, but mainly for political reasons, because he needed their friendship in his long-running rivalry with Charles V. Protestant Europe did not give up on Francis, however, and Calvin addressed his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* to him. Nevertheless sporadic persecution and burnings continued, then even intensified after an order from Francis in December 1538 to pursue and punish heretics. That was the year of the peace treaty of Aigues-Mortes between Francis and Charles. Francis was now seeking the recovery of Milan by more subtle, diplomatic means, and he told the Schmalkaldic League that it could no longer count on his support. Montmorency was the man chiefly responsible for this change of policy; he was orthodox in religion, and disliked by Marguerite d'Angouleme, the king's sister, because he supported the persecution of her Protestant friends.[59]

So Francis, having flirted with reform, had now turned decisively against it. King Henry, ever concerned about the implications for England of a Franco-Imperial friendship, had sent Norfolk to France in February 1540,

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[59] R. Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis 1* (Cambridge, 1994),

instructing him to urge Francis to join an alliance with England and the German Lutheran princes, by which he may 'redubbe all things past' and recover his own.[60] At this time Francis was still taking a hard line against heretics. There was to be no respite either, and on the 1st of June the edict of Fontainebleau gave parliament control over heresy legislation with the aim of rooting it out, even though by then the Franco-Imperial accord was beginning to crumble.[61] So when Marillac told Francis of Cromwell's arrest, the king was well pleased. Henry should thank God that Cromwell's faults have been made known, he wrote back. He blamed Cromwell for all the 'suspicions conceived against not only his friends, but also his best servants', though he gave no names. Getting rid of him will 'tranquillise the kingdom to the common welfare of church, nobles and people'. 'Norfolk will remember what I said of it to him when he was in France', he added intriguingly.[62]

Exactly what Francis said to Norfolk (and Norfolk to Francis) is not clear. Maybe Francis indicated that prospects for Anglo-French relations would be improved if Cromwell were removed from power. If so, Norfolk would surely have told Henry. As Henry's disappointment with Lutherans and Anne left him in need of new allies (the French, perhaps) to replace the

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pp.236-38, 282-283, 308, 314-22, 326-27, 386-89.
[60] *LP* 15.233.
[61] Knecht, *Francis 1*, pp.327-328.
[62] *LP* 15.785. Francis, however, was playing a double game. In May 1540, only a month before the edict of Fontainebleau, he was making overtures to the Lutheran Schmalkaldic League once more; but for two reasons the League did not trust him. First they suspected, rightly, that he was being friendly only because he realised that Charles was not going to give him Milan. Second, the persecution of French Protestants. In October 1540 Charles gave Milan to his son Philip.Montmorency fell from power not long after, but Francis continued the fight against heresy at home. Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin were among a list of proscribed authors. Though many in Francis' court were called 'Lutherans' by observers, in the 1540s prosecutions for heresy increased sharply. The massacre of the Vaudois in 1545 appalled Protestants all over Europe. See Knecht, *Francis 1st*, pp.392-397, 478, 508-516.

Schmalkaldic League, the knowledge that Cromwell was a stumbling block to Anglo-French accord was one more reason for the king to turn against him.

Attainted

The Bill of Attainder against Cromwell was brought into the Lords on the 17th of June, and read the next day. On the 19th it received its second and third readings, and the Lords' unanimous assent, after which it was sent to the Commons. Then on the 29th the Commons returned its own version of the bill with the Lords' original. The Attainder took the form of a petition to the king – unusual, though not unprecedented.[63] One advantage was that it implied a popular demand for Cromwell's execution, deflecting attention away from the real reason – that Cromwell's death was Henry's will. Why the Commons had to produce a new version is unclear.

The main charges on the Attainder are as follows. (Minor charges like retainers and granting passports without authority can be passed over, especially as no historian takes them seriously anyway.)

1. After praising the king for his benign rule his loyal subjects found it all the more deplorable that his majesty 'hath of late found, and tried, by a large number of witnesses, being your faithful subjects, and personages of great honour, worship and discretion', that Cromwell is the most false and corrupt traitor in the king's entire reign.[64]

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[63] Elton, *Reform and Reformation*, pp.292-93; Lehmberg, *Later Parliaments*, pp.107, 109; Redworth, *Life of Gardiner*, pp.123-125.
[64] Burnet 4, p.416.

In fact no trial had taken place. And one of these 'faithful witnesses' was Richard Rich, the man who betrayed Thomas More. Marillac, himself no friend of Cromwell, later called Rich the 'most wretched person in England'.[65]

2. Cromwell has released men convicted or suspected of treason (no names), misused and expropriated funds and enriched himself with bribes (no amounts), made appointments without royal approval (names and offices both missing). He is moreover a 'detestable heretic' who has spread heretical books, especially against the sacrament, all over the kingdom, contrary to articles enacted by parliament.[66]

Again we note the vagueness. Does 'against the sacrament' mean against the mass as a sacrifice, or the real presence? If the first, these books were either Lutheran or Zwinglian, but if the second, they could only be Sacramentarian works.

3. Cromwell has said that it is 'lawful for every Christian man to be a minister of the said sacrament as well as a priest'.[67]

This was either a distortion of the 'universal priesthood', or an attempt to make Cromwell guilty by association with radical heretics like the Lollards.

4. Cromwell has supported and released from custody preachers of heresies. He is also a 'maintainer and supporter' of heretics.[68]

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[65] *LP* 15.804, p.378.
[66] Burnet 4, p.417.
[67] Burnet 4, p.418.
[68] Burnet 4, pp.418-19.

This was tantamount to saying that Cromwell was a heretic himself. The precise 'heresy', however, was still undefined.

5. When in the parish of St. Peter le Poer in London certain preachers, including Robert Barnes, were reported to Cromwell, he had supported them traitorously, saying that: 'If the king would turn from it, yet I would not turn; and if the king did turn, and all his people, I would fight in the field in mine own person, with my sword in my hand against him and all other'. Then he boasted that 'if I live one year or two, it shall not lie in the king's power to resist or let it if he would'.[69]

Again the content of the preaching was withheld, and Barnes was the only preacher named.

6. Cromwell should be 'adjudged an abominable and detestable heretic and traitor' and suffer death at the king's pleasure.[70]

But we are still not entirely clear what the heresy is.

Cromwell's next letter to Henry, dated the 30th of June, clears up the mystery. The king had sent Norfolk and others to Cromwell, requiring him to name anyone he knew who was, or had been, untrue to the King. Cromwell coolly replied that had he known anyone thus minded, he would have detected them already. Then he turned to the Attainder charges. He acknowledged his conviction by parliament on the testimony of 'honest and probable' witnesses. (The sarcasm almost screams out from the page.) As a

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[69] Burnet 4, pp. 419-20.

loyal subject he was bound to obey laws, so he would submit meekly to their sentence. But: though 'laws be laws, yet God is God' – and God knows he has always been faithful to the king and never a Sacramentary.[71] So this trial was a sham, and the charges false.

Three weeks in the Tower had obviously done nothing to soften the prisoner's defiance. The custom was for condemned traitors to abjectly confess their crimes, but Cromwell called the charges against him a pack of lies – and this in the presence of his accusers, and in a letter to the king.

At least the undefined 'heresy' is now clear; it was Sacramentarianism, the most hated of all in Henry's reign. Further, as the only 'heretic' named in the Attainder was Cromwell's close ally Robert Barnes, both these men – both Lutherans – were tarnished with the same Sacramentarian brush.

But there are two notable omissions from the Attainder. First, it contains nothing about his Lutheran contacts, or being Lutheran, or wanting to bring it into England, even though this was one of the main reasons for his arrest, as all the earlier evidence – Marillac's letters and the official announcements – showed. It is not difficult to guess why this was dropped: such a 'charge' could incriminate not only half the council and parliament and even Henry himself. It was Henry who authorised talks with Lutherans, who repeatedly invited Melanchthon to come to England, and who was almost absurdly keen for discussions to continue even after the Six Articles. Those who drew up the Attainder were scarcely so stupid as to bring all this into the open.

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[70] Burnet 4, p.421.
[71] *LP* 15.824; Merriman, *Life and Letters of Cromwell* 2, pp.273-76.

Also, a complete silence has descended on Cromwell's alleged treasonous contacts with the Germans, evidenced by those letters found in his house. Marillac was not the only one who could never find out what was in them.[72] They were never produced in evidence, never quoted against him, never even referred to. Their disappearance confirms the suspicion that these letters (assuming they existed at all) contained nothing incriminating, nothing useful for the prosecution, and nothing especially new. They might have had some propaganda value at the time of the arrest regarding Anglo-French relations, but when it came to fixing charges it seems that they were largely useless. Most likely they proved only the well-known fact that Cromwell had corresponded amicably with German leaders – all perfectly legal in the 1530s.

Therefore the 'Lutheran' charge against Cromwell had been replaced by the Sacramentary charge. So either the official version at the time of the arrest was false, or else the Attainder was false, because no one could be both a Lutheran and a Sacramentary, as Henry, the council and parliament all knew well enough.

The Attainder was also silent on Anne of Cleves, and again the explanation should be straightforward enough. As noted already, Cromwell was not held accountable for his part in arranging the marriage, and it would hardly do even in Tudor justice to call the failure to 'solve' the problem a treason.

It is now necessary to look at the main charges on the Attainder in more detail.

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[72] *LP* 15.804.

Cromwell would 'fight in the field' with his own sword

Something like this was essential if the case against him were to succeed. To favour or incline to Lutheranism was hardly treasonable under Henry when Anglo-Lutheran talks enjoyed the king's approval, but a preparedness to take up arms was a different matter.

The words were an extended version of what we have seen already in the original announcement. There the context made it clear that the faith for which Cromwell vowed to fight was the Lutheran one. By the time of the Attainder, however, Cromwell had been turned into a Sacramentary. The implications of this should not be overlooked. The German Lutherans generally opposed armed rebellion against the civil power, and also offensive wars for religion's sake, believing that the gospel would be won through the power of the Word, not the sword. It was not quite the same everywhere in Protestant Europe, however. The German radical Müntzer was executed after the Peasants' War, and Zwingli had died on the battlefield fighting Catholic armies.[73] So using the same insurrectionist talk in a changed context had the effect of transforming Cromwell from the leader of the acceptable form of Protestantism – the Lutheran variety, which until recently Henry was willing to tolerate and deal with – into a dangerous, seditiously minded, radical heretic.[74]

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[73] E. Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford, 1991), p.206; G. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge, 1976), pp.412-13.

[74] The Lutherans agreed that Christian princes had duty to defend true religion, so a defensive war was acceptable. In 1538 Luther approved resistance to the Emperor, though with misgivings, should he attack the Lutheran states. In that case Charles would be effectively waging war on behalf of the pope, not his own interests. Normally the Christian would be bound to render obedience even to an unjust government, but this did not apply to the pope because he was not a legitimate ruler. If he or princes on his behalf waged war, then resistance was justified. See Brecht 3, pp.199-203; Cameron, *The European Reformation*, pp.353-54. However, this hardly fits Cromwell's case. Maybe he was planning something against Catholic bishops, but not directly against Henry.

Further, the attainder alleged that these offending words were spoken in the thirtieth year of Henry's reign – that is 1539. But Cromwell was not arrested until the summer of 1540. So why was such heinous treason concealed by those who knew of it for up to a year? Why was no action taken against those guilty of the concealment? And why, if witnesses were available, was it necessary to proceed by the furtive Attainder method to try and convict the traitor, instead of the normal court of law?

However, though I know of no historian who believes the charges against Cromwell were true, it is just possible that they were not entirely made up. For example, Christ's words at Jerusalem – 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up' (meaning the temple of His body) – became, in the mouths of the false witnesses at His trial: 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it again in three days'.[75] Whilst not wanting to make Cromwell a Messianic figure, this illustrates how, by altering a statement ever so slightly, it can be twisted into something quite different. So *maybe* Cromwell had adapted St. Paul, who 'fought a good fight' – spiritually, figuratively.[76] As for 'bringing things to such a pass' that in a year or so it would not ' lie in the king's power to resist or let it if he would' – we have seen Cromwell strike against Sampson, and that five others might have been in his sights. It is not unthinkable that Cromwell could have said something like this: 'This time next year, by the grace of God, the gospel will be so far advanced that none can stop it'.

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[75] John. 2.19; Matthew 26.61; Mark 14.58.
[76] 2 Timothy 4.7.

This of course is not to suggest that the accusations contained a certain rough justice. Whatever Cromwell was planning in late May and the first few days of June, it was not armed rebellion or the death of Henry.

Supporting heretical preachers

The case of one Dr. Edmund Steward, chancellor to Bishop Gardiner of Winchester, provides an example of how this charge might have originated. In Gardiner's absence, Steward wrote to Cromwell complaining about one James Cosyn, who had preached against holy water, holy bread and auricular confession. Dr. Steward complained in vain. After a quiet word with Cosyn, Cromwell sent him back free to carry on just as before – and this in Gardiner's diocese![77]

Cromwell rarely missed an opportunity to use his authority to promote the Gospel and place his own men in the diocese of Catholic bishops.[78] His support and patronage of Reformers like Barnes, Crome and Latimer were well known; but as these men were not Sacramentaries, they were free to preach in the 1530s, so Cromwell was doing nothing illegal. He was going as far as he could under Henry VIII, but he and his allies were usually careful not to overstep the mark. In March 1536 for example, when the noted Sacramentary John Lambert denounced all praying to saints as sin, Latimer and Cranmer reproved him. They admitted that praying to saints might not be

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[77] R. Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1993), p.144. *LP* 10.357, 512-13, 588, 723.
[78] E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven & London, 1992), pp.381-91; S. Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), pp.232-38.

necessary by an express Scriptural command, but Lambert was wrong to make a sin of it.[79]

Cromwell and the Sacramentaries: the Calais connection

But the most serious charge was Sacramentarianism, and the most likely source of this was Calais, a town of strategic and religious noteworthiness, but also a hotbed for reformers of various kinds, radicals included.

The deputy, Lord Lisle, was a moderate Catholic. Foxe called his wife a 'wicked lady' and an 'utter enemy to God's honour' (Foxian language for a devout Catholic).[80] Increasingly Lisle felt that his efforts to deal with radical reformers were receiving at best lukewarm support from Cromwell. Lisle's letters to Cromwell on religious problems went either unanswered or answered late. Matters were made worse for Lisle with the nomination in March 1539 of Sir George Carew to the Calais council. Widely perceived to be a Cromwell nominee, Carew opposed the orthodox majority and supported the Protestants. At various times Cromwell showed diplomatic tardiness when asked to act against alleged Sacramentarians. He seemed injudiciously eager to help them even after the Six Articles, though he did appeal to the parliamentarian Thomas Brook to let discretion be the better part of valour, for the time being at least.[81]

Eventually a commissioners' report on religious problems in Calais – long requested by Lisle, and a matter on which Cromwell had been stalling – was produced on April the 5th, 1540. It confirmed the existence there of

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[79] *LP* 10.462.
[80] Foxe 5, p.505.
[81] *Lisle Letters* 5 Examples, pp.358-39; 489-91; 500-504; 675-76. Also *LP* 15.792; Foxe 5, p.502.

heretics and Sacramentaries. Adam Damplip, William Smith and Thomas Brook were among those named, and Carew was said to favour them. The offenders were kept in ward until arrangements were made to send them to England. Henry replied to the report on the 8th April, making clear his resolve to deal with the heresies. But when the Calais prisoners arrived in England on May Day, Cromwell sent for them, ordered their chains to be removed, spoke kindly to them, urged them to be patient, and promised that even though they had to go to the fleet for a little while, they would soon be free to return home again.[82] Cromwell was brimming with confidence, and not at all like a man sensing danger from plots against him. If he felt this way for the Calais men, he must also have been sure that Barnes would be free soon.

But if Cromwell was Lutheran, why was he supporting Sacramentaries? The case of two of the Calais men – Damplip and Brook – might help answer this.

Adam Damplip alias George Bucker, was formerly a Papist and chaplain to John Fisher before his conversion, which followed a visit to Rome when he saw for himself all the 'blasphemy of God, contempt of Christ's true religion', and many more vices. Damplip preached against popery in general, but especially the mass as a sacrifice and transubstantiation. A prior, and one Gregory Buttoll, a chaplain to Lord Lisle, opposed him and reported him to authorities, including Cromwell. He was questioned before a commission in England in 1538 before making his escape.[83]

Cranmer was one of those who examined Damplip, and he wrote to Cromwell about it on the 15th August 1538. According to Cranmer, Damplip

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[82] *LP* 15.460; *LP* 15.473; Foxe 5, pp.515-19; *Lisle Letters* 6, p.117.

had indeed denied transubstantiation, but he still confessed Christ's real presence, which Cranmer thought was 'but the truth'. Two friars, however, testified to the contrary – that Damplip had denied the real presence completely. Since then Damplip had fled, and Cranmer was going to send two trusted men – Champion and Garrett (later Barnes' fellow-martyr) – to Calais to preach. Cranmer called the prior who complained against Damplip a hindrance to the true gospel and a teacher of superstition (in other words a Papist).[84]

Damplip's defence – that he believed in the real presence but rejected transubstantiation – would, if true, make him a Lutheran; which suggests that he and Sacramentaries like him could put on a plausible Lutheran face whenever the protection of Cranmer and Cromwell became necessary. This does not mean that Damplip and others like him were compulsive liars. Maybe he panicked, or backed down under pressure and momentary fear. Maybe Cranmer spoke kindly to him, and managed to talk him out his Sacramentary ideas (or even offered him the Lutheran escape route from certain death). The Papists were the chief opponents of Cranmer and Cromwell, and it was not in their interests to go hunting for heretics in the ranks of the Reformation party if they could help it. Whatever the real reason, the Damplip incident might explain Cromwell's unresponsiveness to rumours and complaints about Sacramentaries in Calais during 1538-40. Perhaps he did not believe that they *were* Sacramentaries. For on the basis of Cranmer's letter – Cromwell's closest ally as well as the senior divine in England – Damplip seemed a good

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[83] Foxe 5, pp.497-501.
[84] Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, pp.375-76.

Lutheran, and the only witnesses against him were recalcitrant popish priors and friars.

Another Calais reformer, Thomas Brook, was also suspected of denying the real presence. Along with Ralph Hare and a few more, he appeared before a commission in 1539, including Cranmer, Sampson and ten others. The evidence against them, however, was too flimsy, so they were dismissed.[85] Brook also took part in the parliamentary debates on the Six Articles, supporting communion in both kinds and attacking transubstantiation.[86] Significantly, though, he made no direct attack on the real presence if communion in *both* kinds was administered. Brook's argument was that the bread, even after consecration, could not be *both* the body and blood of Christ, and the wine likewise. Cromwell, Cranmer and many more were saying the same, and indeed they were permitted to argue the same, at least before the Six Articles became law. Brooke's real target was communion in one kind only, and opposing that was allowed in debates before the Act was passed. Of course Brook was scarcely so foolhardy as to deny the real presence in parliament, but it does seem that, like Damplip and others, he knew how to change from Sacramentary to Lutheran colours in moments of danger.[87]

Still, these men were potential liabilities for Cromwell. On his diplomatic mission to France in February, Norfolk passed through Calais and spent a day or two there. This brief visit gave him the opportunity to hear Lisle's complaints about Sacramentaries and Cromwell's failure to deal with them,

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[85] Foxe 5, pp.509-11.
[86] Foxe 5, pp.503-4.

which he could easily have used as part of a long-running campaign against Cromwell. The editor of the Lisle Letters argues that Lisle's detention in May was part of Cromwell's fightback, and that, knowing Henry's hatred of the 'cankered traitor' Pole and 'that venomous serpent' the pope, Cromwell's plan was to raise the popish spectre at Calais, and arrest Lisle in connection with the Botolf affair, described already.[88] However, the editor admits that even though it was in Cromwell's interest and no one else's to get Lisle out of the way, the known facts are not enough to prove beyond doubt that Cromwell planned to frame Lisle on a deliberately false charge.[89]

But there is another problem with this suggestion besides the lack of conclusive evidence. For if the Sacramentary evidence was being gathered against Cromwell during the spring, why was nothing said about it when he was arrested on June the 10th? Assuming that Norfolk had reported anything suspicious as soon as he had the chance, then Henry knew about these Sacramentary stories in March or April. Yet they did Cromwell no harm at all.

Further, most of the Calais men like Brook and his fellows were discharged at the king's command in the summer of 1540 under a general pardon. Chancellor Audley brought the good news to them in prison. Audley urged them to be careful, because the pardon did not cover Sacramentaries, 'and all of you are called Sacramentaries', he admonished.[90] So quite why they were set free is a mystery. By contrast Barnes, Garrett and Jerome – known Cromwell men – went to their deaths, specifically exempt from that

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[87] No evidence exists that Cromwell was a Sacramentary. A former servant, William Gray, though admitting that his master was a traitor who deserved to die, insisted that he was never a Sacramentary - Ryrie, 'English Evangelicals in the Last Years of Henry VIII', p.178-79.
[88] See pp.198 above.
[89] *Lisle Letters* 6, pp.40-41, 211-251; *LP* 14 (2) 280, 711, 940.
[90] Foxe 5, p.519.

same general pardon.[91] This suggests that Cromwell was not particularly closely identified with the Calais men, nor they with him.

So the Calais story, though absorbing and relevant, may be more peripheral than central in the drama of Cromwell's fall. It had the potential to do him harm, but it would appear that it did not, at least not to any great degree. Cromwell was already in the Tower and as good as condemned before the Sacramentary charge was brought.

If, therefore, the Calais evidence was *not* an integral part of the plot leading to Cromwell's arrest, then it must have been hastily dredged up afterwards to ensure a conviction. It is of course possible that Sacramentary rumours were whispered in Henry's ear during the spring, and that he refused to believe them *then*. However, the important point is that no mention was made of this most damaging charge until the attainder process began, and that was *after* the arrest.

A calculating, ruthless rationale might have lain behind this. Cromwell was a powerful man as well as a defiant prisoner, with supporters as well as enemies. So it was essential for the success of the conspiracy that any potential support for Cromwell in the council or parliament should be neutralised. The Sacramentary charge would do just that, because under article one of the Six, denying the real presence was not only a heresy, but an unforgivable heresy, with no hope of mercy even after a recantation.[92]

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[91] *LP* 15.498, p.217, II. Cap.49.
[92] A.G.Dickens, *The English Reformation* (2nd edn., London, 1989) p.201.

The Divorce

With Cromwell removed from the Council, the way lay open for the king's second divorce. On the 30th of June Henry sent Norfolk, Audley and Southampton to the Tower to demand that Cromwell declare 'on the damnation of his soul' what he knew of the marriage between Henry and Anne. Cromwell described how Henry had taken him into his confidence and told him of his feelings (or lack of them) for Anne, and that the marriage was not consummated. About the same time Gardiner was drawing up 'an order to be observed in the process for this matter'. So the divorce arrangements began. Chancellor Audley delivered a speech in Convocation on the 5th of July on the danger to realm if – though pray God avert it – some accident were to befall Henry's only heir, Prince Edward. A second heir would then be needed, born 'in true and lawful wedlock'. Alas, it was 'doubtful' that such a blessing would be granted from this present marriage, due to 'some impediments, which upon inquiry may arise to make the validity of that marriage dubious'. (It sounds as though they had already decided what these impediments were.) Audley proposed that a delegation from both Houses should go to the king and beg leave to speak with him on this most delicate matter. The delegation was despatched straight away. Henry replied that he 'could neither deny nor grant' the request, but thought it best to refer the matter to the clergy.[93] As with the 'petition' attainder, all was carefully stage-managed to make it look as though the initiative came from parliament, not the King.

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[93] Merriman, *Life and Letters of Cromwell* 2, p.268; *LP* 15.821-23; Lehmberg, *Later Parliaments*, pp.112-113.

Another speech by Gardiner on the 7th stated the reasons why the marriage was invalid, and next day Convocation declared Henry free to marry another. The reasons for divorce were these: Anne was pre-contracted to the son of the duke of Lorraine; Henry's displeasure on meeting her and his reluctance to complete marriage ceremony; the fact that the marriage was not consummated; and England's need of a male heir in the event of Prince Edward's untimely death. Anne's consent was obtained without difficulty. Marillac wrote to King Francis on the 21st telling him of the divorce, which brought 'great regret of this people, who loved her and esteemed her much', and how it was 'commonly said' that Henry would soon marry 'a lady of great beauty', Norfolk's niece. If reports were to be believed, the ambassador added, 'he would say this marriage has already taken place and is consummated, but as this is kept secret he dare not yet certify it as true'.[94]

The reasons cited for divorce, and the ease with which the arrangements were concluded, prove that ending this marriage was not a particularly 'great matter' for Cromwell. His 'great matter' was the collapse of the Lutheran policy. With a Catholic queen, and Norfolk and Gardiner in the ascendancy at court, the Reformation would be stymied, if not reversed. Gardiner's prominent role in the Convocation suggests that he had already, before Cromwell's arrest, assured the king how quickly everything could be arranged, with the obvious implication that Cromwell was the obstacle standing in the way of it.

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[94] Lehmberg, *Later Parliaments*, pp.114-15; Redworth, *Life of Gardiner*, p.128; D. Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 4 vols. (London, 1737) vol. 3, pp.852ff; *LP* 15.844-45, 860-61, 901, 908, 925; Burnet 4, pp.446-449. For a discussion of the pre-contract with the duke of Lorraine's son, see Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.371-73.

A brief word is necessary on the role played by Catherine Howard in the drama. Henry first saw her in August 1539 when Norfolk, wanting to have some of his family in the new queen's household, brought her to court. As David Head well notes, Norfolk could not have known then that Henry would dislike Anne when he met her; so Norfolk's intention, at least at this early stage, was not to use Catherine to tempt Henry away from his German bride and injure Cromwell in the process. It was reported that Henry 'cast a fantasy' to her at first sight.[95] If so it was not a strong enough fantasy to kill his desire for Anne, and it did not keep him from rushing down to Rochester on New Year's Day to catch a glimpse of her rather than wait for the scheduled meeting at Greenwich. As we know, as early as January the marriage was a failure, and such a fiasco could hardly be kept secret for long. But the first positive indication of anything seriously romantic between Catherine and the king are the records of Henry giving her presents, including a set of quilts, in April and May.[96] Also in May the stories of 'feastings and entertainments' in Gardiner's palace were first heard. So if it was part of Norfolk's and Gardiner's grand plan to use Catherine's charms to seduce Henry into a Catholic marriage, and damage Cromwell at the same time, then they were strangely slow to seize their opportunity. It would seem, therefore, that to the amazement of Cromwell's rivals and everyone else, Henry fell for Catherine before any such thought occurred to them. For the Catholic party, the latest royal love affair was an unexpected and unplanned boon. They exploited it to the full, but it was not of their making.

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[95] Head, *Norfolk*, pp.179-80; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, p.429; *LP* 14 (2) 572; 15.21; 16.1409.

Summary: Why Cromwell Fell

The failure of Cleves marriage, though not immediately laid to his charge, was the beginning of the end for Thomas Cromwell. A more decisive moment came in Lent. Until then Henry thought that he and the Lutherans were agreed on justification, but the Barnes-Gardiner confrontation shattered those delusions. Gardiner, now back in royal favour, had ample opportunity to clarify things to Henry. As a result, Henry wanted to abandon both his Lutheran policy and his German wife. About this time or very soon after, he fell passionately in love with Catherine Howard. Cromwell was able to deflect the immediate personal danger by a show of unity with Gardiner at dinner, and then with some impressive performances in parliament. Yet 'one thing troubled him' – Henry's failed marriage – about which there was nothing he could do. The king's unforeseen passion for Catherine made his dilemma unsolvable. By now Norfolk and Gardiner were whispering things in Henry's ear: Cromwell was too Lutheran; he was an obstacle to good relations with France; he was stalling on the king's divorce, and standing in the way of Henry's happiness with Catherine; perhaps gossip from Calais as well. Witnesses were being lined up in readiness. Then, when it seemed that Cromwell was about to strike against the bishops and rout the opposition, Henry agreed to act. Perhaps Cromwell had sensed that his days were numbered, and planned one last assault on the bishops, hoping, like Samson of old, to bring his enemies down with him. The suddenness of his arrest was confirmed by Marillac. The official announcement indicted him for a religious 'treason', for plotting to impose Lutheranism against the king's will. But Henry

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[96] *LP* 15.613 (12), 686.

had also backed the Lutheran policy throughout the 1530s, so neither this, nor Cromwell's known support for Queen Anne, were sufficient to condemn him, especially as the dubious character of witnesses like Rich was common knowledge. Something more damning was required, so when the Attainder was drawn up, the Sacramentary charge replaced the Lutheran one. (The fact that the Commons for some reason produced its own version of the bill might suggest that hasty last minute alterations were going on as the attainder process took its course.)

So although Henry made use of the machinations of the anti-Cromwell faction at court, he was not deceived or manipulated by them into acting against his will. Cromwell fell for the same reason that all the mighty ones before him had fallen. Catherine of Aragon, Wolsey, More, Fisher, Anne Boleyn – two queens, a cardinal, a chancellor, a leading bishop and champion of the old order, and now a Vice-Gerent – all shared one thing in common: they lost the king's favour at a crucial moment. It is true that they had enemies, but their enemies' darts did them no harm until the king willed it. There is no reason why Cromwell should be any different. Opposition to him did not begin in 1540. For years he was the chief Reformer and advocate of the Lutheran alliance which the Catholics had resisted all along, but there was little they could do until Henry himself turned against it.

This analysis has brought the 'R' factor – religion – back into the centre of the debate. It does not deny factional politics and power struggles at court, which indeed existed in Tudor England, though they were not peculiar to it. But the most powerful influence over policy in Henry's reign was the Reformation, that religious revolution without parallel in the history of

Christendom. And it was during Lent in 1540 or very soon after that *Henry* – not this or that faction – wanted to abandon the religious policy which he had authorised and approved during the last eight years, a policy which coincided with, and was partly due to, Cromwell's rise to power. For this reason, the Vice-Gerent's hour had come.

This is not to suggest that Henry called Norfolk and Gardiner into his study one day and ordered them to cook up charges against Cromwell. There are more subtle ways of removing troublesome ministers than this. We may conjecture that Henry made known his frustration regarding the divorce and the Lutheran policy to the right people, thereby encouraging them to produce allegations of treason and maybe heresy, tentatively to begin with, then more confidently as time went on. Henry played hard to get at first, but kept their hopes alive, so it was only a question of waiting until the right moment. It is clear from the confidence and arrogance of Norfolk and Southampton when Cromwell was arrested that they knew they were acting with king's full approval.

Of course Norfolk and Gardiner (and maybe others as well) were on the lookout for ammunition against Cromwell long before Henry gave them the green light. Gardiner was obviously trying to provoke Robert Barnes at Lent, in a calculated plan to seize the initiative won by the Six Articles and deliver another body blow to Lutheranism in England. But Gardiner was no soothsayer able to see the future, still less to control it. The bishop could could lay the trap, but it did not lie in his power alone to despatch the quarry. Cromwell recovered quickly; the harm done to him was minimal, and Barnes could have stayed out of trouble simply by keeping quiet. Cromwell fell only

when he fell foul of the king. So the ability of factions to get rid of rivals was severely limited. Just as Mark Antony could 'do no more than Caesar's arm when Ceasar's head is off', likewise without King Henry on their side, the Duke of Norfolk and even wily Winchester, for all his cunning, were impotent against Cromwell.

If further proof is needed, let the king himself supply it. When Henry, six years later and near to death, named a Council of Regency for Prince Edward, Gardiner's name was not on it. Sir Anthony Browne asked whether this was an oversight, but Henry told him to hold his peace; he had left Gardiner out deliberately, because of his 'troublesome' nature. 'Marry', went on Henry, '*I myself could use him, and rule him to all manner of purposes, as seemed good unto me*; but so shall you never do'.[97]

Nemesis

The drama then moved swiftly to its climax. The Attainder against Barnes, Garrett and Jerome – those 'detestable heretics who have openly preached erroneous opinions and perverted many texts of Scripture' – was introduced on the 17th of July. Justification was the single issue at Lent, but since then their heresies had secretly multiplied and were 'too long to be rehearsed'.[98]

Their belief on justification was no different from that of other Reformers, including the one Cranmer had so painstakingly spelled out in the Bishops' Book.[99] Barnes' misfortune was that his contest with Gardiner had shattered Henry's dreams of a religious agreement and alliance with the Lutherans. For this, and this alone, he was doomed. As with Cromwell, so

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[97] Dickens, *The English Reformation*, p.220; Foxe 5, pp.691-92 (emphasis mine).

with his allies – attainder was the only method possible. The legal irregularities (judicial murder might be more exact), the secrecy, the suddenness, the strange acquiescence of the Reformers in council and Parliament – all this would have been impossible unless it was widely known that Henry personally supported or authorised the accusations.

Cromwell was beheaded on the 28th of July. He died 'in the Catholic faith, not doubting in any article of my faith'.[100] For choice ambiguity, these last words are vintage Cromwell; 'Catholic', for instance, could be used by Reformers to mean the true, universal church, as well as by traditionalists. He did not doubt 'any sacrament of the church' – but neither did he define what he meant by a sacrament, or how many he believed there were.

It was not a penitential confession of the seven sacraments that the onlookers were listening to. The sacrament he never doubted was the Eucharist, and right to the last Cromwell was denying the Sacramentary charge:

> 'Many have slandered me, and reported that I have been a bearer of such as have maintained evil opinions; which is untrue: but I confess, that like as God, by His Holy Spirit, doth instruct us in the truth, so the devil is ready to seduce us; and *I have been seduced'*.

The words in italics (mine) might have puzzled his hearers, and would be a puzzle still were it not for the Calais evidence. The 'evil opinions' were surely the Sacramentaries' opinions. Cromwell had indeed been seduced, but not

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[98] *LP* 15.498 p.215, l.58.

into believing them himself; he was seduced by Sacramentaries like Damplip and Brook masquerading as Lutherans, men he had supported unwittingly, and in doing so had given his enemies much needed ammunition, as doubtless he now realised.

Then ambiguity was abandoned, and his last prayer put any lingering doubts about his faith to flight. He relied wholly on the grace of God, having no merits or good works of his own, only a heap of evil ones; but 'through thy mercy, I trust to be in the number of them *to whom thou wilt not impute their sins; but will take and accept me for righteous and just*, and to be the inheritor of everlasting life'. Then he committed himself to Christ the Saviour who gave His body and blood for him on the cross. '*Let thy righteousness hide and cover my unrighteousness.* Let the merits of thy passion and blood-shedding be satisfaction for my sins'. A good Catholic could also extol the saving merits of Christ's passion, and maybe even leave out any reference to the saints; but the words in (my) italics – how the sinner is declared righteous by the righteousness of Christ (alien righteousness in theological jargon) – are unabashedly Lutheran.

On the same day that Cromwell died, Henry married Catherine Howard.

Two days later at the stake Robert Barnes fared as boldly as his patron.[101] He also denied the heresy charges. He 'has been slandered to preach that our Lady was but a saffron-bag', but that was completely false. He had consistently opposed and detested Anabaptists and Sacramentarians, and took no small part in hunting them down. Barnes then made confession of

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[99] See Chapter 3, pp.167-71.

his faith, in outline like the Creed but emphasising justification solely through Christ and His passion. Still, good works must be done, and 'they that do them not shall never come into the kingdom of God'. They are necessary 'to show and set forth our profession, not to deserve or merit; for that is only the death of Christ'. Then he returned to our Lady – that 'Virgin immaculate and undefiled ..... the most pure Virgin God ever created'. Barnes seemed incensed by the charge that he had maligned Mary, because this effectively branded him in the minds of the people as an extreme radical. Though she was no Mediatrix or Intercessor, Lutherans freely called her the 'Mother of God', they extolled her faith, piety and saintliness, and at least in Barnes' time they did not even question her perpetual virginity.[102]

Tainting the English Lutherans with the most extreme of heretics was all part of the smear campaign against them. John Standish later claimed that he heard Barnes speak slanderously of our Lady more than two years before he was burned. In that case, retorted Miles Coverdale, a friend of Barnes, 'Our Lady hath but a faint friend of you', who like a 'coward' refused to defend her until her slanderer was dead. Coverdale also answered Standish's charge that Barnes preached a 'carnal liberty' with his 'damnable doctrine of faith alone', insisting that Barnes had always exhorted people to good works.[103]

Then in yet another peculiarity of this trial – for it was almost unheard of for a condemned and unrepentant heretic at the stake to be asked for his view on a matter of doctrine – someone asked Barnes what he thought of

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[100] Cromwell's last words and last prayer - Foxe 5, pp.402-03.
[101] Foxe.5, pp.434-36.
[102] See, for example, Luther's 'Magnificat', *LW* 21, Index, 'Mary: Mother of God', p.214 for many references. He also called her 'Holy Mother' (*LW* 1, p.235). Even 'Queen of Heaven' was a 'true enough' name for her, so long as we do not make her a goddess or intercessor (*LW* 21, p.327).

praying to saints. He replied that it was not commanded in Scripture, but if they pray for us, 'then I trust to pray for you within this half hour'. (Standish was also infuriated by this 'damnable presumption' of confidence in salvation through faith alone, and rejection of purgatory.)[104]

Barnes then asked the Sheriff if 'ye have any articles against me for the which I am condemned'. The Sheriff replied that he did not. Barnes turned to the crowd to see if any of them knew why he was to die, or what error he had taught. There was no answer. So he prepared for death, praying for forgiveness of those who brought him here, mentioning only Gardiner by name 'if he have sought or wrought my death by word or deed', and likewise any of the council. He reminded the people of their duty of obedience to the King, for whom he had five requests. First, that he might use the wealth confiscated from the abbeys for the benefit of the poor. (Many besides Barnes felt that Henry was using rather too much of it to enrich himself. 'The poor well feel the burning of Doctor Barnes and his fellows which laboured in the vineyard of the Lord', Henry Brinklow would later lament; 'for according to their office, they barked upon you to look upon the poor'.[105]) Second, to ensure that matrimony should be held in more honour (perhaps another example of bravado in the face of death, especially as Henry had married Catherine Howard two days before). Third, he wished that swearers be punished (the significance of this is not too clear). Fourth, he hoped that Henry would set forth the true religion, and make an end of what he had begun. Finally, the king should trust to God's word, and be not deceived by

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[103] M. Coverdale, *Remains,* ed. G.Pearson (PS, 1846), p.350, pp.338-39.
[104] Coverdale, *Remains*, p.425.
[105] S. Brigden, 'Popular Disturbance and the fall of Thomas Cromwell and the Reformers, 1539-40', *HJ* 24 No. 2 (1981), p.270.

false preachers. After similar though shorter speeches from Garrett and Jerome, the fire was lit.

On the same day and at the same place, three Catholic priests – Thomas Abel, Richard Featherstone and Edward Powell – were hanged, drawn and quartered for treason. These men were long-term prisoners, supporters of the papacy and Catherine of Aragon. Thus three Lutherans and three Papists were fated to die together. According the Foxe the explanation lay in the division of the Council, split roughly fifty-fifty with eight Reformers and nine Catholics, so that when the one half clamoured for the deaths of the Lutherans, the other demanded the blood of the Papists in return, resulting in a macabre draw. Prof. Elton agreed that the priests were probably sacrificed by the victorious anti-Cromwell faction to prove that there was nothing popish about them. A. G. Dickens discerned a 'studied impartiality' in the spectacle, while Jasper Ridley has no doubt Henry ordered it.[106]

The decision on the timing of the executions was taken in secret, so we are left to guess. Barnes' case was certainly hopeless once Cromwell was condemned, but on the other hand these popish plot theories had not gone away yet. Sampson, Wilson and Lisle remained in jail, so the Reformers had an opportunity for some grisly bartering. If the Lutherans had to die, why should the king's other enemies – the Papists – be allowed to live? A persuasive case in the circumstances, and Gardiner and Norfolk were not so foolish as to throw away their spoils for the sake of a few obstinate priests. But whatever the wheeling and dealing in the Council and Parliament, these side-by-side executions were menacingly symbolic of Henry's determination

to be master in his own church and realm, rejecting and defying both Rome and Wittenberg. In dealing with the factions at court and council, it was not Henry's policy to give one side an absolute victory over the other; it was more in character to exert his authority over both. Jasper Ridley is almost certainly right.

Marillac reported the burnings and hangings to King Francis, and how both Lutherans and Papists 'complained in that they had never been called to judgement, nor knew why they had been condemned, and that the condition of Christians in this age of grace is worse than that of the Jews under the rigours of the Law, by which a man was need to be heard and convicted before he was judged.' This basic right was upheld everywhere except in England, and 'everyone is dismayed by the encouragement thus given to false witnesses'. One of the priests denied speaking treasonously against the king, though he acknowledged that many years ago he had called Catherine of Aragon the lawful queen. These words 'so moved the people that if they had a leader there might have been a great tumult'. Commissioners have been appointed to 'inquire touching those who approve or speak of what the doctors said'. Marillac then gave his view of the central dilemma of Henry's religious policy: the government has rejected the doctrine of the pope and that of the Germans, yet insists on keeping what it commands, 'which is so often altered that it is difficult to understand what it is'.[107]

News spread quickly around Europe. Charles V heard that Cromwell 'conspired to make himself king and had offered the Lutherans, without Henry's knowledge, to conform to their opinions and unite with them'. (There

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[106] Foxe 5, pp.438-39; Elton, *Reform and Reformation*, p.293; Dickens, *The English*

could be some truth in the second of these.) Cardinal Farnese wrote to the Bishop of Modena, telling him of the pope's concern that the emperor might make concessions to Lutherans, and noting favourably how Henry had at last 'taken a turn in the right direction by punishing Cromwell for the countenance given' to them. Another witness reported that Cromwell was beheaded for urging Henry to be a Lutheran.[108]

Friend and foe alike agreed that Cromwell belonged to the Lutheran faith. Melanchthon heard of 'atrocious crimes' in England – Anne was divorced and 'men of our opinion in religion are murdered'. Casting away his customary mildness, he rounded furiously on the 'English Nero'.[109] 'No more pleasing victim can be sacrificed to God than a tyrant', he wrote, quoting an ancient tragedy. 'Would that God might put this mind into some brave man'. Henry was now beyond redemption; Melanchthon wished only that God may 'destroy that monster'.[110]

Luther wrote a preface to a work of Barnes' published in Wittenberg, heaping praise on 'Saint Robert' and scorn on 'Squire Harry' in roughly equal measure. He gave glory to God that his friend who had stayed and dined at his house was called of God to die a 'holy martyr' for His Son. 'Who could have believed twenty years ago that Christ was so near to us'. He recalled Barnes' loyalty to the king, 'which Henry ill deserved'. He suspected that the cause of his death was covered up because 'Henry must be ashamed of it',

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Reformation, p.202; J. Ridley, *Henry VIII* (London, 1984), p.343.
[107] *LP* 15.953.
[108] *LP* 15.906, 911, 929.
[109] *LP* 15.982; *CR* 3, col.1070; *LP* 15.985; *CR* 3, col.1071; *LP* 16.5; *CR* 3, col.1077. Also fn.110 below.
[110] Anglicus tyrannus Cromwellum interfecit et conatur divortium facere cum Juliacensi puella. Quam vere dixit ille in Tragoedia, non gratiorem victimam Deo mactari posse quam tyrannum. Utinam aliquo forti viro Deus hanc mentem inserat. *LP* 15.1003; *CR* 3, col.1075. Also *LP* 15.1015; *CR* 3, col.1076.

though reports reaching Germany told how Barnes had attacked Henry for wanting to divorce Anne of Cleves, just as John the Baptist had Herod. Luther's contempt for Henry, kept in check while the Anglo-German talks lasted, surfaced again. Henry never had any intention of accepting the gospel; he just wanted to be pope in his own land. 'Squire Harry wants to be God and do what he likes'. Any one who stands in his way is a heretic, because whatever 'Squire Harry' wants must be made an article of faith 'for life and death'.[111]

Luther was not an entirely unbiased judge of course, but his opinion of Henry is not far removed from Marillac's, no friend of either Luther or Cromwell. The ambassador gave his frank assessment of Henry's character in a letter to Montmorency on the 6th of August, identifying three chief vices. The first was covetousness, so great that 'all the world would not satisfy him'. Preachers who urged him to use the wealth confiscated from the abbeys for hospitals, education and other worthy causes were burned as heretics, 'as they said at their execution' (the execution of Barnes and his friends). Second, the king trusted no one, 'and will not cease to dip his hand in blood as long as he doubts his people'. His third vice was 'lightness and inconstancy', so that affairs of religion, marriage, faith and promise can be 'altered to any form'. The bishops were partly to blame for allowing him to 'interpret, add to, take away and make more divine laws than the apostles or their vicars and successors ever dared to attempt', and making Henry not only a king, but also 'an idol to be worshipped'.[112]

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[111] *WA* 51, pp.445-51.
[112] *LP* 15.954.

This third vice manifested itself very clearly the following year – 1541. In January Edward Crome was made to confess that masses were a 'profitable sacrifice' for the living and the departed, a subject Henry seemed willing to pass over during the discussions with the Germans in summer 1538.[113] With Cromwell gone it seemed that the Catholic faith, though still without the pope, was secure once more. But any traditionalist rejoicing was short-lived, and in March Henry was accusing his ministers that 'upon light pretexts, by false accusations, they made him put to death the most faithful servant he ever had'.[114] However, no one was arraigned or despatched to the Tower on perjury or other charges. Maybe Henry was missing Cromwell's ministerial abilities and blaming whomever he could, or maybe suffering a bout of indigestion, like a cantankerous whale after swallowing a shark. Then in May an earlier order of Cromwell's requiring Bibles in every church was enforced, with financial penalties for those in breach, leaving Marillac more bewildered than ever about religious policy in England. Further measures against shrines, saints' days and feast days followed.[115]

Lesser players in the Cromwellian drama had mixed fortunes. The main witnesses against him, Rich and Throgmorton, were rewarded for their services with lands and allowances.[116] Bishop Sampson was not released until 1541. Lord Lisle, though never convicted, died in the Tower in March 1542, shortly after learning that he was pardoned and soon to be released.[117]

The fact that Henry did not release these men immediately after Cromwell's

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[113] *OL* 1, p.214; A. Ryrie, 'English Evangelical Reformers in the Last Years of Henry VIII', pp.49, 148. See discussion on private masses in Chapter 2.
[114] *LP* 16.589-90.
[115] *LP* 16.820; D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven & London, 1996), pp.283-6.
[116] *LP* 16.305.2; 878.80 p.427.

fall suggests that he was not entirely sure that the suspicions of collaboration with Pole and Rome were false. Botolf, meanwhile, became one of the luckiest men of Henry's reign. He was picked up, probably in Louvain, then set free again. How he ended his days is not known, but most of his accomplices were hanged and quartered.[118] Damplip was detained in London for two more years, then sent back to Calais in 1543 to face heresy charges. He ended up condemned for treason for receiving a French crown of Cardinal Pole.[119] Anne of Cleves lived quietly and contentedly as the king's sister, with two goodly houses and an allowance of 500 shillings per annum.[120]

But despite mixed fortunes and royal mood swings, on one issue Henry remained constant. When the King's Book (a revision of the Bishops' Book) was published in 1543, the issue of justification came up once more. Cranmer fought bravely for 'faith alone', but Henry was unyielding. Like Macbeth, he made assurance double sure: justification by faith, Henry decreed, meant 'faith neither only nor alone.'[121]

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[117] *Lisle Letters* 6, pp.180-82, 238.
[118] *LP* 15.812; *Lisle Letters* 6, pp.113-115.
[119] Foxe 5, pp.520-22.
[120] *LP* 15.930.
[121] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p.309; *King's Book*, ed.Lacey (London, 1932), p.11. Also God became the 'principal' (not sole) cause and 'chief' worker of justification. So the Bishops' Book and the King's Book triumphed over the Ten Articles.

Chapter 5: The Ways of Providence

Introduction

Having traced the struggles and misfortunes of Lutheranism in Henry's England, this chapter will take a retrospective look at events and examine what went fundamentally wrong. Rather than going over doctrinal issues again, it will consider the underlying nature of Lutheranism, how it compared with other 'heresies', and then why it succeeded in much of Germany and Scandinavia but failed in England.

Two significant points are the distinctiveness of Lutheranism in church history, and the way the Lutherans spread their message. There was something unique about Luther that the Church was a little slow to grasp, and this uniqueness made it unlikely that any nation steeped in the medieval teaching could be converted without an organised, controlled method of evangelising. Experience suggests, however, that certain conditions had to be right for Lutheranism to succeed. One of these conditions was the religious attitude of the king, a point that will become clearer when Henry VIII is contrasted with Christian III in Denmark, Gustav Vasa in Sweden and the German princes.

The Lutheran Heresy

To many Catholics at the beginning of the Reformation, the Lutherans were just another heretical movement. This is hardly surprising, because like heretics of yesteryear, Luther made anti-church, anti-papacy, anti-clerical noises, and he also proclaimed a salvation outside the recognised

sacramental system.[1] But perhaps this superficial reaction failed to discern that things were just a little different this time.

Luther attacked the established church on several fronts, but two of his principal points were justification by faith alone, and the mass as a gift and a promise, not a sacrifice to be offered by priests. Significantly, not one of the main medieval heretical groups held *either* of these.

The Lollards, for example, denied transubstantiation, maintaining that the bread and wine remain on the altar. Christ's presence was figurative, not corporal, and some among them made the Sacrament a mere memorial. There is no evidence from Lollard texts that they supported communion in both kinds. They opposed images and pilgrimages, though not all were iconoclasts. Because Christ is the sole Mediator, purgatory, indulgences and prayers for dead were generally rejected, and later on, prayers to the saints as well. The pope was to be obeyed in so far as he followed Scripture, but Christians are not bound to believe that pope is among the elect. However, Luther's *sola fides* was not part of their creed.[2]

It formed no part of Jan Hus' heresy either. Hus believed in the supremacy of the Bible, and called on the clergy to show more Christ-like simplicity; he approved communion in both kinds, but did not deny transubstantiation. But he accepted a faith formed by love, more medieval than Lutheran. Though Luther often spoke admiringly of Hus, he owed him no debt on justification. There was some contact in the early 1520s between Wittenberg and the Hussites, but no formal alliance. Before long the radical

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[1] See also D. Bagchi, *Luther's Earliest Opponents: Catholic Controversialists, 1518-1525* (Minneapolis, 1991), pp.177-79.

Hussites were harassing Luther's supporters in Prague, while the Bohemian Brethren held a spiritualised view of Lord's Supper, and maintained priestly celibacy. Contact between them and Luther effectively ceased in 1524.[3]

As for the Waldenses, they were more disobedient than doctrinally incorrect, at least to begin with.[4]

Regarding the mass as a sacrifice, the situation is the same. A declaration by the Chancellor and Doctors of Oxford University in 1381 condemned Wyclif for denying transubstantiation and the real presence, but was silent on the sacrifice question.[5] After Hus' death the more radical Hussites denied the real presence and confessed a spiritual one instead. Much traditional Catholicism was given up, including the mass, discarded in favour of services in a congregational style.[6] But there was no articulated denial of the mass as a sacrifice in the manner of Luther, so this may have been little more than a feature of their general anti-clericalism. Allowing for certain minor differences over details, the mass as a sacrifice was an established and virtually unchallenged medieval consensus until Luther.[7]

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[2] A. Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford, 1988), pp.281-84, 289, 304, 309-12, 331, 500; R. Rex, *The Lollards* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp.41-42, 59-60.

[3] Brecht 1, p.332; 2, pp.74-77; M. Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church* (Princeton, 1966), pp.46-47, 54-55, 72-76, 323-25; W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (4th edn., Edinburgh, 1986), p.382.

[4] E. Cameron, *Reformation of the Heretics: The Waldenses of the Alps, 1480-1580* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 85, 93; E. Cameron, *Waldenses, Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 2000), pp.2, 298-303; Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, pp. 305, 307.

[5] D. Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, 2 vols. (London, 1909) 1, pp.373-74. For Wyclif and Lollards on the Eucharist, see also A. Hudson, *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings* (Cambridge, 1978), pp.17-20, 110-15; *The Premature Reformation*, pp.281-84; Rex, *The Lollards*, pp.42-45.The disputes concern the Christ's presence in the Sacrament, not whether the mass is a sacrifice or promise.

[6] M. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (2nd edn., Oxford, 1994), pp.339-40.

[7] However, the 'sacrifice' doctrine was not explicitly defined by the pre-Reformation medieval church. Aquinas' works were hugely influential, but not official dogmas - Bagchi: *Luther's Earliest Opponents*, pp.132-39. A phrase in Lateran 4 connects the sacrifice of Christ with the Eucharist – in qua (the church) idem ipse sacerdos et sacrificium Jesus Christus, cuis corpus et sanguis in sacramento altaris sub speciebus panis et vini veraciter continentur,

Heretics who opposed the sacramental salvation of the medieval church tended to put in its place a rigorous standard of moral law and ethics.[8] The concept of God's free forgiveness and justification of the sinner, entirely regardless of anything meritorious in him, eluded even the church's most prominent critics. Heresies against the Eucharist invariably meant denying transubstantiation, but not the sacrifice. So Luther's two main thrusts against orthodoxy – *sola fides* and the mass as a promise – were new, unforeseen and unforeseeable.

Further confirmation that Luther really was something extraordinary soon followed, when, in the middle 1520s, this arch-heretic and excommunicate defended the real presence – that favourite target for heretics in the past – against Zwingli and the new Sacramentarians. Such a man could not fail to puzzle his contemporaries, and it may be no coincidence that shortly after the Luther-Zwingli controversy, Henry began to feel differently towards Luther. Henry had his personal and domestic reasons of course, and he still thought that Luther was wrong on many points; but perhaps he could not be *that* wrong if he was so sound on the Eucharist.

Something else about Luther put the medieval church in an even bigger quandary. Not only were his two main arguments both entirely new, they also seemed to contain an inherent contradiction: for who needs remission of sins through the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist when it can be received through faith *alone*?

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transsubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem potestate divina. *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo et al. (3rd edn., Bologna, 1973), p.230, lines 34-37. But Trent is more explicit: see *COD*, p.733, line 32 – p.734, line 5.

[8] See, for example, Rex, *The Lollards*, p.42.

If I seem to have over stressed the originality of Luther and the difficulties he posed, then consider the views of two of the best English Catholic minds of Luther's time – John Fisher and Stephen Gardiner. Luther's 'faith alone' effectively denied the efficacy of the Sacraments, Fisher felt.[9] Gardiner insisted that it could not co-exist with the Eucharist; Luther had abolished five sacraments, but halted at the Eucharist because 'he did not dare follow out the full force of that proposition to the end'.[10]

These two were not alone in this view, and neither was it confined to Tudor times. Four hundred years later Francis Clark could claim that by reducing the Sacraments to signs, Zwingli and the Swiss 'adhered most faithfully and logically to the original principles of the Reformation'. Also Richard Rex felt that John Fisher's theology of justification, 'unlike that of Luther and the Reformers, left room for the Sacraments to play an active part in the Christian life'.[11]

It is no surprise that even the best theological minds of Henry's day and ours could find Luther something of a mystery. His collected writings fill nearly a hundred volumes, but one searches in vain for an explanatory tract entitled 'How to reconcile 'faith alone' with my teaching on the Sacraments', or something similar.

Had he dealt with this question, it might have gone something like this. A patient does not ask the physician why he has to take one medicine rather than another, why one spoonful of this and two of that, or why a combination

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[9] R. Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge, 1991), p.117.
[10] *Letters of Stephen Gardiner,* ed. J.A.Muller (Cambridge, 1933), p.335.
[11] F. Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (2nd edn., Devon, 1980), p.108; Rex, *Theology of John Fisher,* p.129. For the argument that Zwingli's doctrine of the Eucharist was intended to 'safeguard *sola fides* against sacramental ceremonialism', see G. Locher, *Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives* (Leiden, 1981), p.59.

of medicines is 'necessary'. Assuming he has any sense and wants to be cured, he simply takes what he is given trustingly. The same applies to theology. At the root is man's fallen state, for which Christ is the only Saviour, and though Christ promised that 'whosoever believes with be saved', He gave the Sacraments as well. So that is the reason for *both* 'faith alone' and the Sacraments. That is the medicine, or the medicinal mixture, which the divine Physician has prescribed. In Luther's mind the point is not how the two can be harmonised; the point is that they cannot be separated. Here is the God-given cure for souls; it is not something to be rationalised, analysed or harmonised – but only believed. How could fallen man weigh the ways of his Maker and pass judgement on them anyway?

Thus Luther (maybe), though apparently it never occurred to him that any such explanation might make a useful addition to Reformation literature.[12]

Be that as it may, Luther was something more than just the latest in a long chain of heretics. Consequently the church's apparatus for dealing with heretics, far from equipping it to deal with adequately with Luther, proved of little value, and almost a hindrance. The church resembled a nation facing an enemy armed with weapons for which no known defensive capability existed.

Luther's 'tower experience' has been discussed many times, perhaps most ably by Brecht.[13] The subject to be examined here is how to introduce the Reformation to the people. Having hopefully made the point about Luther's uniqueness, it follows that a disciplined evangelical technique might

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[12] In case this sounds like putting words in Luther's mouth, consider this: 'He who asks why something which God says and does is necessary, surely is trying to elevate himself above God and be wiser than God' (*LW* 37, p.139). Here the subject was the real presence in the Sacrament, which Luther was defending against Zwingli and Oecolampadius. His opponents had queried why the bodily presence was necessary. For Luther, such questions were inherently insolent and blasphemous.

be required if the nations were to be converted from the old faith to the new. Medieval religion was as entrenched, established and accepted as parliamentary democracy is today in the western world. Only something powerful and penetrating could convince whole nations that a religion so taken for granted was actually fundamentally false, and that this new gospel was the true one. The story of the expansion of the Reformation in Germany provides a clue as to what that something was.

The Reformation in Germany

Despite the imperial ban imposed at Worms, Luther lived most of his adult life in relative freedom. The mandate had hardly been issued before Frederick the Wise asked the Emperor Charles V if he might be exempt from it in Saxony. Amazingly, Charles agreed.[14]

This extraordinary situation was due to political and constitutional developments in pre-Reformation Europe. Whereas England, France and Spain had seen the growth of a strong centralised monarchy, in Germany the trend was the reverse. In 1338, during the time of the Avignon papacy, the German electors rejected the pope's right to influence imperial elections, and insisted instead that the emperor should be chosen by a majority of estates without the need for papal approval. This demand was supported by Charles IV in the Golden Bull of 1356.[15] The resulting relationship between the Electors and the Emperor was complex and subtle. Electors were quasi-Kings in that they could levy taxes, make laws and even forge alliances, though a

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[13] Brecht 1, pp.179-237.
[14] Brecht 1, p.474.

sort of unwritten rule existed, according to which they would do nothing injurious to the Emperor's interests. Even so, the German Emperor was more beholden to the electors than the kings of France, Spain and England were to their nobility. Partly for this reason the twenty-one years old Charles V decided not to risk a confrontation with the powerful Frederick the Wise, thus effectively neutralising his own imperial mandate.

During the medieval age the German princes enjoyed an increasing prominence and control over their churches, though not as much as in the post-Reformation years. Their attitude to Luther varied considerably. Duke George in Albertine Saxony and William of Bavaria were hostile adversaries, but they failed to prevent Luther's message finding supporters. Joachim of Brandenburg, Christopher of Bremen-Verden and Henry of Wolfenbüttel were mainly concerned with avoiding civil unrest, while Casimir in Brandenburg-Kulmbach, Ludwig of the Palatinate and Philip of Baden allowed the new gospel to take its course. In Saxony, when Elector John succeeded Frederick the Wise in 1525, the creation of a state church began. Pastors were appointed, opponents of the gospel dismissed, churches and monasteries were closed or brought under the control of the state, and visitations arranged to reach the rural areas. Other Reformist princes soon followed this example. Albertine Saxony became Lutheran when the Catholic Duke George died in 1539 and was succeeded by his brother Henry. A high powered delegation, including Luther, Melanchthon and Jonas, went to see Duke Henry and advised him on various matters ranging from abolishing the mass in the monasteries to pastoral visitations. Also at the end of 1539, Joachim II

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[15] E. Schwiebert, *The Reformation* (Minneapolis, 1996), p.46. For a discussion on the growth of national feeling and sovereignty in European countries, see J.A.F. Thomson, *Popes and*

sanctioned the Reformation in Electoral Brandenburg, and liaised with Luther and others regarding a church ordinance. In the process princes enriched their treasuries with income from the church, and especially monastic lands.[16]

For the new gospel to succeed, it was not essential for the prince to be an enthusiastic convert himself. Frederick the Wise's Saxony was converted without the ruler's fiat or example, and the same was true in other German states. This suggests, as C. Scott Dixon as already noted, that it enjoyed a strong measure of popular support.[17] But maybe it points to something else as well – namely the calibre of the new preachers and evangelists, and how they learned the Lutheran gospel. They learned it, most of them, from the University of Wittenberg.

The Reformation and the University of Wittenberg

The Wittenberg university was founded 1502 by Elector Frederick the Wise with the permission of the Emperor, and modelled on the universities of Paris and Bologna. Later he asked for, and received, papal confirmation. Initially the main subjects to be studied were the liberal arts (or philosophy), theology, law and medicine. The liberal arts curriculum was dominated by the works of Aristotle, taught in three ways – that of Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, by Andreas von Karlstadt, Nicholas Amsdorf and Jodocus Trutfetter respectively. Each student had to decide at beginning of his course which of these three he wanted to study. For theology students, Lombard's Sentences was the standard work. The governing body of the university was

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Princes: Politics and Polity in the Late Medieval Church (London, 1980), pp.29-53.
[16] Brecht 3, pp.287-88; 295-97; 300-311; C. Scott Dixon, 'The Princely Reformation in Germany', in *The Reformation World*, ed. A. Pettegree (London, 2000), pp.146-62.
[17] Dixon, C. Scott, Ibid, pp.153-55.

the Senate, composed of the rector (the head of the university), the masters of theology and liberal arts, professors of law and medicine, the dean and the five canons of the Wittenberg All Saints Castle Church. The Church benefited from a substantial papal endowment granted in the fourteenth century, which placed it directly under Rome, and additional income from more than thirty villages. The costs of the university were met mainly from the Elector's reserves until 1507, when Frederick successfully petitioned Pope Julius II to incorporate the university with the Castle Church in a joint endowment. After this the Castle Church increased significantly in importance, having other churches under its care, and consequently more funds.[18] So without realising it, the pope provided a secure financial foundation for what would soon become the principal seat of learning for the Lutheran Reformation.

During the next ten years or so, Brother Martin the devout, conscientious monk, became transformed into the stormy Reformer that we all love (or hate). By 1517 he wanted to replace Aristotle and the scholastics with the church fathers, and even more important, classes in Greek and Hebrew. Luther and Melanchthon, who arrived from Tübingen in August 1518 as professor of Greek, were both convinced that knowledge of the sacred languages was indispensable to a true understanding of the Word. Melanchthon also taught Hebrew temporarily, because finding a suitable permanent Hebrew professor became a frustrating task. One of those who took the post briefly, a Spanish Jew called Matthaeus Adrianus, soon started arguing with Luther about Moses and the gospel. Eventually in 1521 Matthäus Goldhahn, a former Wittenberg student, was appointed, to the satisfaction of

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[18] Schwiebert, *The Reformation*, pp.185, 220-31, 319-24.

all.[19] Melanchthon was so dedicated to the ancient languages that during the 1520s he resisted Luther's entreaties to concentrate on theology, and delegate Greek and Latin to others.[20] Crucially Frederick the Wise, by now cautiously favouring the new theology, was persuaded by Georg Spalatin to support the university reforms as well.[21]

The early Lutherans had no master plan for spreading the Word far and wide beyond the boundaries of Wittenberg. The tendency was to react to opportunities and contacts, in the early days usually by letters and tracts explaining the gospel. Initiatives generally came from outside. One example of this was Luther's 'apology' to Henry already discussed.[22] On hearing (wrongly) that Henry was ready to accept the Gospel, but perhaps embarrassed to approach Luther directly because of the earlier row with him, Luther wrote soothingly to him. Unfortunately this was all based on a misunderstanding. More successfully, in 1524 Johannes Bugenhagen was invited to Hamburg to help establish the Reformation there, and a year later Luther recommended Michael Stifel as preacher to the Jörger family in Tolleth, Upper Austria. But no organised strategic plan was drawn up and approved in Wittenberg for exporting the Gospel.[23]

However, the need to educate ministers and theologians for the future was now being addressed in earnest, and the university was crucial in providing such men. The names of Luther and Melanchthon acted like a magnet, drawing increasing numbers of students to Wittenberg from all over

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[19] Brecht 1, pp.275-81.
[20] C. Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer* (Westport, Connecticut, 1975), pp.92-101.
[21] Schwiebert, *The Reformation*, p.457.
[22] See Chapter 1, p.40.
[23] Brecht 2, pp.77, 345-47.

Germany and beyond.[24] Meanwhile the Castle Church, that most Catholic institution, carried on with its masses and veneration of relics. Luther detested its very existence, but despite several blasts against it from the pulpit and in print, the mass continued until 1524. The following year Frederick the Wise died, and was succeeded by his brother John, a prince even more supportive of the Reformation. When Spalatin told him that the fairly substantial revenues of the All Saints Foundation would help meet the increasing expenses of the university, Elector John had the assets of the Foundation placed under state control. Under his son John Frederick in the 1530s, there were more guarantees of financial stability, as well as further university reforms, especially in theology. Study of Scripture, based on the sacred languages, was the priority, with the Augsburg Confession and the Apology the chief doctrinal guide. The prescribed exegetical courses were as follows. The New Testament professor lectured on Romans, Galatians and St. John's gospel, while his Old Testament counterpart did likewise for Genesis, the Psalms and Isaiah. Bugenhagen, preacher of the Castle church, taught the epistles of Peter and John, and the town pastor took Matthew, Deuteronomy and sometimes the Minor Prophets. These were the books selected for students studying for a doctorate. Without wishing to divide the books of the Bible into first and second class categories, Luther felt that these were Scripture's most evangelical and doctrinal writings, and a sound knowledge of them would enable the student to become a truly effective minister and theologian. Luther and Melanchthon also gave lectures when time permitted.[25]

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[24] Manschreck, *Melanchthon, The Quiet Reformer*, pp.43-44.
[25] Brecht 2, pp.127-29; p.242; 3, pp.115-124; Schwiebert, *The Reformation*, p.484.

Professor Schwiebert has described the Reformation as a 'University Movement'.[26] It was led and directed by a well-educated religious elite. The very architects of the Reformation – Luther and Melanchthon – had restructured the university on a strong evangelical foundation. Here at Wittenberg, the future Lutheran missionaries and leaders received their classical Lutheran education; here they could eat, sleep and breathe the new gospel, before taking it back to their own parishes and lands. The value of such an education can be clearly seen from the Scandinavian experience.

The Reformation in Denmark and the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein

King Christian II of Denmark quickly perceived that Luther's anti-papacy and universal priesthood could be useful in curbing the power of his bishops, and perhaps his nobility too. In 1520 he obtained the services of a Lutheran preacher Martin Reinhard, though he turned out to be a disappointment. Next year Andreas Karlstadt became his adviser. Some reform followed, mainly in the monasteries, in restricting ecclesiastical influence and allowing priests to marry. Then opposition to Christian grew; he was deposed in 1523 and succeeded by his uncle Frederick I, who showed sympathy rather than enthusiasm for the new faith.

The country's most prominent early Lutherans were Hans Tausen and Jørgen Jensen Sadolin. Both were former Wittenberg students. Other early Danish Reformers were as much humanist as Lutheran. In 1526 Frederick made Tausen his royal chaplain. The king's protection enabled these men

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[26] Schwiebert, *The Reformation*, Part 2, pp.184ff. The educational policies of Luther and Melanchthon were not limited to theology. On their enthusiasm for education, and the educational reforms they supported, see Brecht 2, pp.138-42; L.W.Spitz, *The Religious*

and their supporters to continue their missionary work, and Lutheranism soon gained ground and increased in influence.

In Schleswig-Holstein Lutheran activity began in Husum in 1522 when Hermann Tast, another Wittenberg trained divine, started preaching with strong support from Frederick's elder son, Duke Christian, himself a committed Lutheran. In 1526 Christian was further aided by two German ministers, Eberhardt Weidensee and Johann Wenth, who later became an author of the Church Orders of Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark. In Haderslev Wenth converted the collegiate chapter-school into a theological academy designed to educate students to become Scandinavian Lutheran ministers. Similar schools were soon set up in Malmø and Viborg. New ministers were admonished to preach the (Lutheran) gospel, and also encouraged to follow Luther's *Kirchenpostille*. Annual visitations, similar to those Melanchthon had devised for Saxony, were arranged. The Lutheran gospel was jealously guarded, and ministers had to renounce on oath Sacramentarianism and the Anabaptists. In all these developments, Duke Christian played an active and supportive role.

When Frederick died in 1533 the duke won the support of the Danish nobility, but the bishops preferred his younger brother Hans. Following a civil war, Christian emerged as victor in 1536. The Catholic Church of Denmark was then effectively abolished, and the bishops' estates were handed over to the crown to be used for the king and the common good. Next year Johannes Bugenhagen, one of the most respected divines in Wittenberg, came to Denmark to crown the new king, ordain seven bishops, and reform the

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Renaissance of the German Humanists (Camb. Mass., 1963), pp.248-66; Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer*, pp.131-57.

university of Copenhagen along the lines of the one in Wittenberg. That same year the Danish Church Order was prepared, and Christian sought and obtained the approval of the Wittenberg theologians for it. Among other things it made Luther's 'Postil' and Melanchthon's 'Apology' and '*Loci Communes*' required reading for ministers. The Reformation then proceeded gradually and steadily. King Christian continued to take a personal interest in theology, and kept up a regular and cordial correspondence with Luther, Melanchthon and Bugenhagen. Thus Denmark became a Lutheran kingdom, and eventually Norway, a separate kingdom but under Danish rule, followed. By the time Christian died in 1559 and his son Frederick II succeeded him, the new faith was well established.[27]

From the Danish example, three requirements for a successful conversion to state Lutheranism can be identified.

The first was the presence of at least one native minister or theologian who had received a specifically Lutheran education at Wittenberg (like Tast and Tausen). He became the Lutheran expert on the ground – effectively Wittenberg's man in Denmark. He was the one who could answer the difficult questions and refute opposing arguments. He also knew his own country, his people, laws, customs and culture better than any foreign missionary. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that education was the key to evangelising.[28]

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[27] Brecht 3, pp.318-19; E. Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford, 1991), pp.272-74; O.P.Grell, 'Scandinavia' in *The Reformation World*, ed. A. Pettegree (London, 2000), pp.257-71; O. Grell (ed.) *The Scandinavian Reformation: From Evangelical Movement to the Institutionalisation of Reform* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.12-41, 179-80; Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, pp.465-66.

[28] Of course a Wittenberg education was no absolute guarantee that a man would remain Lutheran forever. The Hungarian Mattias Biro Devay, for example, despite studying in Wittenberg and even living for a time in Luther's house, later fell under the Swiss influence on the Eucharist, much to Luther's dismay (Brecht 3, p.325). However, such defections were not a problem in Denmark.

The second requirement was a supportive prince or king. Thanks to him, the evangelists were able to bring the new gospel to the people, and establish theological academies for the training of local ministers. Thus the necessary infrastructure for converting the nation was in place. A Christian pluralism or a 'multi-faith' culture may be dear to the hearts of modern liberals, but in the sixteenth century a country was expected to be Catholic or Protestant, but not both. As the divine right of kings was almost universally accepted, invariably the choice rested with him.[29]

The third ingredient – maybe more highly desirable than essential – was the presence in the country of an eminent Lutheran divine (in Denmark's case Bugenhagen) to oversee the introduction of the Reformation, acting as a sort of theological consultant to the host nation.

Having learned from Denmark, we can now look north to Sweden.

The Reformation in Sweden

Among the earliest Swedish Lutheran evangelists were the Petersson brothers, Olaf and Lars (also known as Olaus and Laurentius Petri). Like their Danish counterparts, both had received their theological education at Wittenberg University. King Gustav Vasa, who came to the throne in 1523, gave them and their allies political rather than whole-hearted religious support. Nevertheless, it was enough for the Lutherans to make progress, and a Swedish New Testament was produced in 1526. In the same year Gustav closed down the Catholic printing press in Linköping and transferred it to

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[29] There were a few examples of Catholic and Protestant coexistence, but they were not particularly happy ones. In Erfurt Catholic and Lutheran services were allowed after the Peasants' War, with the predictable result that opposing preachers attacked each other lustily

Stockholm, one of the few parts of the country where support for the Reformation was fairly strong, thereby giving the Lutherans a greater opportunity to spread the word. Next year Gustav began to act against the church, demanding the surrender of property and land to enrich the crown. But he also faced a peasants revolt (the Daljunkeren's revolt), partly against the new teaching and preaching. A national synod of Örebro in 1529 failed to reach a religious settlement, resulting in further unrest in Stockholm and rural areas of the southwest.

Progress continued sporadically, though not without resistance from clergy, the nobility and the country as a whole. In 1531 Lars Petersson was appointed archbishop of Uppsala, though authority over the other bishops rested with the king. In 1536 Gustav gave tacit support for the Lutheran mass and for abolishing clerical celibacy. But whereas Denmark was accepted into the Schmalkaldic League in 1538, Sweden had two applications – in 1538 and 1541 – turned down. Then disagreements developed between Swedish Lutherans, including Olaf Petersson, who wanted an independent church, and the king, who sought to bring it under royal control. In 1539 Olaf Petersson and Lars Andersson, the king's Lutheran chancellor, were tried for treason, though soon reprieved. Displeased with his own nationals, Gustav invited the Pomeranian and Wittenberg educated Georg Norman, a man recommended by Luther and Melanchthon as a tutor for his son, to advise him on church affairs. Soon after this Gustav brought the church fully under royal sway.

But there was still no national confessional settlement. Norman drafted a Church Ordinance in 1540, but for reasons unknown he failed to complete it.

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from the pulpits. Luther felt the situation was impossible. Brecht 2, p.345-46; Cameron, *The European Reformation*, p.235.

Lars Petersson drafted another in 1561, but it did not become law until the Parliament of Stockholm approved it ten years later. During the 1560s and 1570s Swedish Lutheranism faced a Catholic reaction and Jesuit missionary activity, as well as the growing Calvinist influence. The death of King Johan III in 1592, and the prospect that his Catholic minded successor Sigismund might restore Sweden to the old faith, concentrated the minds of the Lutheran nobility and clergy. At the instigation of the powerful Duke Karl of Södermannland, brother of the late king, three hundred of them gathered for the Uppsala Assembly in March 1593, where the Augsburg Confession was formally adopted. Karl was a Reformed Protestant himself, but he supported the Lutherans against the Catholics, and wished that Lutherans and Calvinists could agree on essentials and form a united Protestant front. A reluctant Sigismund was compelled to guarantee liberty of conscience to his Lutheran subjects.

Meanwhile in Finland a reformist Dominican, Mårten Skytte, was appointed to the see of Turku in 1527, and he soon arranged for students to go to Wittenberg for their theological education. During the 1530s and later, these men were evangelising in Finland. One of the most prominent was Mikael Agricola, who studied in Wittenberg from 1536-39, then succeeded Mårten Skytte in Turku, and translated the New Testament and some of the Old into Finnish. In fact virtually all the leading Swedish and Finnish Reformers had studied in Wittenberg, and met Luther and Melanchthon personally.[30]

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[30] On the Reformation in Sweden and Finland, see the following: I. Andersson, *A History of Sweden* (London, 1956), pp.153-54; Brecht 3, p.319; Cameron, *The European Reformation*, pp.274-76; Grell, 'Scandinavia', in '*The Reformation World*', ed. A. Pettegree, pp.271-74; Grell (ed.) *The Scandinavian Reformation*, pp.42-69, 100-113, 144-78; M. Roberts, *The Early*

So Sweden had the same ingredients for success as Denmark: evangelists trained in Wittenberg, the support of the king, and a specialist Lutheran adviser in the shape of Georg Norman. Perhaps the most notable difference between the two countries was the attitude of the king. Gustav of Sweden lacked Christian's deep commitment to Lutheranism, but although this caused problems it was not fatal for Reform. Similarities existed between Gustav and Frederick the Wise, who allowed Lutheran preaching without being a committed Lutheran himself, and as a result much of Saxony became Lutheran without his diktat. However, as Luther was a heretic and excommunicate under the ban, even tacit support from the ruler was effectively a green light for Reform, for it allowed the missionaries and evangelists to do their work relatively freely. On the other hand, resistance to Reforms, more marked in Sweden than in Denmark, is always more likely when people suspect that the king's heart may not be in them. The progress of Reformation in Sweden was further hampered by disagreements between the King and the native Lutherans regarding church organisation and the church-state relationship, which a Bugenhagen figure might have sorted out more amicably. Whatever Georg Norman's recommendations, he lacked Bugenhagen's theological stature. Denmark had other useful advantages as well. Being nearer to Wittenberg, it was more accessible, while its greater urbanisation (10% of the population lived in towns compared with only 5% in Sweden) made it easier for the new gospel to reach more people more quickly.[31]

Vasas: A History of Sweden, 1523-1611 (Cambridge, 1968), pp.68-71, 82-83, 132-33, 141, 171-76, 289-90; Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, pp.466-68.

[31] Grell, 'Scandinavia', in *The Reformation World*, p.257.

Allowing for all of this, therefore, it is not difficult to see why the Reformation took longer in Sweden than it did in Denmark. Nevertheless, it is a tribute to the pioneering work of the Peterssons and their allies that Swedish Lutheranism eventually managed to beat off both a Catholic reaction and a Calvinist challenge.

Denmark, Sweden and England Compared

These lessons can now be applied to England. Regarding the first requirement, Robert Barnes was the native evangelist with a Wittenberg education.[32] But here the similarities come to an abrupt end. On the English throne was a king committed to a religious settlement, but not a Lutheran one. Henry was eager for a Wittenberg luminary (Melanchthon) to visit him – but not to superintend the Reformation in England like Bugenhagen in Denmark. Henry wanted a German delegation lead by Melanchthon to negotiate a new agreement, possibly a successor to the Augsburg Confession, quite unlike Christian III or Gustav Vasa.

So whereas Denmark and Sweden had the three necessary ingredients for a national conversion, England really had only one (Barnes). And in 1540 he and his patron were both dead. Whether by instinct or design, Stephen Gardiner had targeted his enemies with lethal accuracy in Lent and summer 1540.

The problem for the English Reformers was not that Henry lacked interest in religion; in fact in one sense he showed too much interest. Had he been more like Gustav, content with the largely political advantages of a

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[32] Barnes studied in Wittenberg from 1528-31 – N. Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans* (St. Louis, 1965), pp.58, 251.

Lutheran settlement (head of the state church, independence from Rome, increased revenues from the monasteries and church lands), and had he left the doctrinal details to the Council and the Bishops, then under Cromwell and Cranmer, Lutheranism might have prevailed. But for our Defender of the Faith, such a detached stance was unthinkable. Henry's insistence on being so closely involved in religious affairs, combined with his latent Catholicism, ensured that the new gospel would not triumph. Even a Lutheran Vice-Gerent could make little difference. Cromwell could influence and manipulate behind the scenes, support and energise his own men, harass and muzzle the opposition; but he still lacked the decisive authority of a king.

Henry's whole approach to the Lutherans was markedly unlike that of Gustav and Christian. Though all three kings stood to gain by battering down the old order and increasing their personal authority over the church, Henry did not need Lutheranism to provide him with the moral justification for ousting papal authority. He claimed that he had a historic right to be head of the church in England.[33] Also in the divorce crisis, Henry had discarded the Lutheran idea that he should keep Catherine and take another wife; and as his divorce was at least partly a doctrinal issue, Henry became doctrinally independent of Lutheranism before the Anglo-German talks began in earnest. So he was never beholden to them spiritually. Having overruled them once he could do so again – and on communion, the mass and priestly marriage he did just that. After 1533, Henry recognised no spiritual superior except the church fathers.

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[33] The *Collectanea*. See also Chapter 1, p.51.

Again unlike Henry, Lutheran princes left theological details to their divines. Quarrels in Sweden between the king and certain bishops were concerned with church administration and how much state control there should be, not with dogma. Both Christian and Gustav took the Augsburg Confession *in toto*; Christian formally, Gustav effectively, by supporting Lutheran preachers. They were not interested in parleying or wrangling. Each was satisfied with his role as head of the church, and neither aspired to arbitrate on dogma, still less to construct his own creed. Henry, however, did. He even went further than that, because on clerical celibacy he was not only devising dogmas of his own, but even making new divine laws as well.

Then there was Wittenberg University, accepted by Gustav and Christian as the intellectual spiritual powerhouse of Protestant Europe, the place to send the best young brains of the country for a first class theological education. And if any problem arose regarding church orders for example, or if something required specialist advice, then the obvious thing to do was to consult Wittenberg. But there is no evidence that Henry had any more regard for Wittenberg than any other European university.

So it was in his religious mindset, not just his religious beliefs, that Henry differed from the Lutheran rulers in Germany and Scandinavia, and consequently the religious destiny of England took quite a different course.

But then Henry was different from all of Europe's rulers, not just the Lutheran ones. His misunderstanding over justification makes the point well.[34] Facile though it may seem to suggest that Henry's Lutheran policy was based largely on human error, there is a peculiar sort of inevitability about it. By

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[34] See Chapter 3.

making himself head of the church with the right to settle doctrinal points, King Henry had set himself a near impossible task. Mastering complex theology, particularly at a time of religious conflict and crisis, was a full time vocation, requiring extensive knowledge of Scripture, canon law, church law and church history. To acquire the necessary proficiency *and* take responsibility for foreign policy, domestic policy, and court affairs (to say nothing of other essential royal duties like hunting, hawking, jousting and all the sports and entertainment of which Henry was extravagantly fond) was beyond the ability of any man, however gifted. Unkind observers might suggest that another of Henry's problems was that he was too vain to appreciate this. Certainly he underestimated the role he claimed for himself.

Of course it could be argued that, given the theological disagreements among his bishops, Henry had no choice but to intervene. However, there were disagreements among bishops and divines all over Europe as well. The difference is that whereas Europe's kings came down decisively on one side or the other, our Henry, like the emperor with no clothes, insisted on following his own idiosyncratic religious path, with the church fathers as the only authorities he really trusted. He was mindful of the danger of isolation abroad, but seemed unaware of how isolated he really was at home. Though there were many able scholars and divines in England, practically no one of any significance shared the king's aims exactly. The Catholic and Reformation parties each had their own agenda. The Catholics could just about stomach the rejection of papal authority (many perhaps hoping amongst themselves that it would only be temporary) and they did not object to getting rid of abuses that nearly everyone recognised had crept into the church. Despite

this, they still wanted the church to remain broadly true to the medieval faith. As for the Reformers, they were trying to persuade Henry that accepting the Reformation gospel was the way to steer the church back to the faith and teaching of the ancient fathers. Religious tension between the two factions was a feature of Henry's reign, as each tried to tug the king in its own direction, though neither succeeded completely.

Henry was truly unique in sixteenth century Europe, and as a result the English Reformation was unique as well.

Summary

For this new gospel to penetrate medieval strongholds, skill and good fortune as well as faith and doctrine were essential. Luther and Melanchthon could provide the first (the skill) – not through strategic planning or aggressive marketing or waging war, but through education. A favourable prince or king lay outside their control, but through the Wittenberg University they could ensure that whenever and wherever providential opportunities arose, the necessary expertise was available to take advantage of them.

A Queenly Faith

However, the ingredients for success in Germany and Scandinavia are based only on empirical evidence, not some absolute, unalterable law. In England things could still have been different. Cranmer was living a charmed life under Henry, while other responsible Reformers used discretion to stay out of danger. The Lutheran cause was far from lost, and in fact its prospects

received a wholly unexpected boost when Henry married for the sixth and last time.

Katherine Parr's religion aroused no suspicions when she became Henry's queen in July 1543, but soon after that she used her pen rather than her voice to confess her faith. Her devotional work, '*The Lamentation of a Sinner*', testifies to a deep conversion, even though, as with Cromwell and Cranmer before her, exactly when it happened is not clear.[35]

She lamented her former sinful life, in which she 'embraced ignorance, as perfect knowledge ....., regarded little God's Word ....., called superstition godly meaning' The Lord spoke 'many pleasant words' to her, but she would not hear. It soon becomes clear to the reader that her past life was not a pagan, immoral one. She 'worshipped visible idols, and images of men's hands, believing by them to have gotten heaven'. She never esteemed the blood of Christ sufficient to wash her from her sins, and sought instead remission of sins from such 'rifraff as the bishop of Rome had planted'. Now she knew that 'to despise Christ's Passion thus is the vilest sin', for in Christ crucified God 'doth show Himself most noble and glorious'.

Once her knowledge of Christ was 'blind knowledge, both cold and dead' (what Protestants called mere historical faith.) Now faith alone saves, but a true and lively faith, not 'dead, human and historical'. Nor is this faith any 'derogation to good works; for out of this faith spring all good works'. The same faith 'holds fast the promises of God's mercy, the which maketh us righteous'. She thanked God for opening her eyes to see, with living faith, the truth of Christ the Redeemer, whom, until this time she never truly knew. 'By

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[35] Katherine Parr, *The Lamentation of a Sinner*, in Harleian Miscellany (London, 1808) 1, pp.286-313.

faith only I am sure to be justified'. Those who attack this lively faith show they do not have it; the historical faith which they 'learned in their scholastical books', can never justify.

Predestination was touched on only briefly and non-dogmatically. The true believer gives 'thanks for his election', and his 'godly faith' does not make him 'presumptuously inflamed', or neglectful of good works.

Briefly the 'Lamentation' turned into a redemption song, like the children of Israel's after crossing the Red Sea.[36] Christ has won the victory over sin and the law, so there is 'nothing worthy of damnation' in the believer. Though the 'dregs of Adam remain' they 'be not imputed for sins, if we be truly planted in Christ'. It has pleased God to leave the remnants of sin in believers, so that those who previously served sin, can now – through Christ's victory – be its master. (Katherine had obviously thought through her faith, and her work is no mere dull recitation of other men's dogmas). Christ has triumphed too over Satan, the world and death, yet it has pleased God not to entirely destroy these enemies either. Instead the Christian can triumph over them, through Christ. Death has lost its sting, and Satan's temptations serve to exercise and strengthen our faith; Christians learn to despise the vain glories and false wisdom of the world. Henry, her 'husband and sovereign lord', was compared to Moses for leading England out of the bondage of Pharaoh (a type of the pope). Then maybe Christian charity and wifely devotion got slightly the better of her as she gave Henry the credit for making God's word available in England.

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[36] Exodus 15.

Sola Scriptura received its own queenly endorsement. No man's doctrine is to be 'esteemed or preferred like unto Christ's and the apostles'. (She did not mention the church fathers). She was angered by those who used the gospel for 'carnal liberty', and the 'contentious disputers' who bring discredit to the gospel, allowing Papists to claim that too much knowledge of the Bible is the cause of all trouble. Why blame God's Word because some who read it fall into heresy? True believers do not use 'carnal and human reason to interpret Scripture'. Nor do they try to craftily persuade men that much knowledge of Scripture 'makes men heretics' unless it is tempered with 'human doctrine, sophistry, philosophy and logic, according to the traditions of men'. Katherine also commended humility and gentleness, and those not wise in their own eyes. She abounded with encouragements to charity and godly Christian living, and sorrowed keenly over schisms and contentions in religion, for no war is 'so cruel and evil as this'.[37]

Wisely the '*Lamentation*' remained unpublished until Henry died.[38] Nevertheless, her new found Lutheran beliefs did not go unnoticed, and before long she aroused the suspicions of that ever-watchful traditionalist hawk, Stephen Gardiner. Foxe describes how she enjoyed discussing theology with Henry, but on one occasion must have overstepped the mark, leaving Henry grumbling aloud at being taught theology by his wife. On hearing this, Gardiner took his cue to plant the suspicion of the queen's heresy in the king's mind, and articles were drawn up against her. But

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[37] Janel Mueller has discerned the influence of Latimer on the queen. One of her closest friends, Katherine Brandon, was Latimer's patroness. See J. Mueller, 'A Tudor Queen Finds Voice', in *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture*, eds. H. Dubrow and R. Strier (Chicago, 1988), pp.15-47.
[38] S.E.James, *Kateryn Parr: The Making of a Queen* (Aldershot, 1999), p.234.

Katherine promised always to defer to the king in religion, and was soon reconciled to the king.[39]

So Foxe's story goes, and Glyn Redworth, Gardiner's advocate, reckons it is 'largely of his own making', based on something he read in the Privy Council's records. Redworth notes that no accusation was brought against Gardiner at his trial 1550-51 about his alleged attack on the queen, and that there is nothing in John Bale's works about it either.[40]

Actually Foxe's story is unusually vague on one key point. The historian who narrates exhaustively the charges and proceedings against Barnes, Lambert, Cranmer and others gives no details of the articles against Katherine, even though he is able to report private conversations between Katherine, the king and Gardiner, and even though these articles were deliberately misplaced, then picked up by 'some godly person' and brought to the queen. So they were hardly a complete secret. Yet despite all of this, we do not know precisely what she was accused of.[41]

Be that as it may, Katherine's Protestantism was beyond doubt, and so was her courage. Knowing the fate of some of her predecessors, even flirting with Reform was a dangerous thing for Henry's wife to do, especially as the King's Book of 1543 had effectively outlawed Luther's 'faith alone'.[42] Writing about *sola fides* in 1545-46 was braver than preaching it in the 1530s.

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[39] Foxe 5, pp.553-61.
[40] G. Redworth: *In Defence of the Church Catholic: Life of Stephen Gardiner* (Oxford, 1990), p.234. However, Susan James accepts Foxe's account of Gardiner's role in the conspiracy: *Kateryn Parr*, pp.259-62.
[41] Susan James suggests that they may have hoped to charge the queen and her ladies with holding forbidden books, like Coverdale's New Testament: *Kateryn Parr*, pp.273, 276.
[42] *King's Book*, ed.Lacey (London, 1932), p.11.

It is worth lingering over the '*Lamentation*' to try and establish whether Katherine was Lutheran, or whether the Swiss Sacramentarian heresy had infiltrated the court of King Henry. There is no section devoted to the Eucharist in her book, though her rejection of 'unwritten verities', not commanded in Scripture but still taught as 'doctrine apostolic and necessary to be believed', may be a swipe at transubstantiation.[43] There might be a suspicion of guilt by association with the formidable Sacramentary heroine Anne Askew, now under interrogation and torture in the tower. Anne's captors demanded that she name names, whether the Duchesses of Suffolk or Sussex, Lady Denny and others were of her sect, or whether they had sent her money. Anne was not asked about Katherine specifically, but these ladies were close to the queen, and some belonged to her household. Someone obviously thought that torturing Anne might be a way to incriminate the ladies of court, and maybe the queen herself. But Anne gave nothing away; either she was bravely protecting them, or she really did have no connections with them.[44]

So there is no firm evidence that Katherine was heretical on the Sacrament, and it is far more likely that she was not. Latimer stayed orthodox on the real presence until 1547.[45] The exact date of Cranmer's conversion is still unknown, but even if he had changed during the last years of Henry's life, it is highly unlikely that he would have confided in the queen on such a dangerous subject.[46] Some of her ladies may have sent Anne Askew gifts or

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[43] Katherine Parr, *Lamentation*, Harleian Miscellany 1, p.309.
[44] Foxe 5.547.
[45] Foxe 6, p.505.
[46] For Cranmer and the Eucharist, see chapter 6.

money, as Foxe's account relates, but that does not prove that they agreed with her on everything.[47]

Another passage in the '*Lamentation*', on God's love in sending His Son for our redemption, strengthens the case for Katherine's Lutheranism specifically. 'Inwardly to behold Christ crucified on the cross is the best and godliest meditation that can be', she wrote. This crucifix is the book containing all that is 'necessary for our salvation' – God's love, redemption, man's sin, Christ's victory through weakness and suffering.[48] The word 'crucifix' was theologically taboo in many Reformed circles, but not with Luther. When I hear of Christ, 'an image of a man on a cross is formed in the heart', he had said when defending crucifixes against Karlstadt and the iconoclasts in 1525. This is no sin, so why should it be sin to have that image before the eyes?[49]

Six years before that, Luther had written a pastoral meditation on Christ's passion, outlining how the true Christian should reflect upon the Cross. Sentimental contemplation, imagining that that will somehow bring personal benefit, and sentimental sympathising with the suffering Christ, were both dismissed. Instead smitten hearts and consciences should ponder the Passion, believing that Christ died for us, and thereby learn God's love for the world in giving His Son.[50] This is exactly what Katherine was doing in the '*Lamentation*' twenty-five years later. It is highly unlikely that she had read

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[47] Susan James acknowledges the possibility that Katherine could have secretly adopted Zwinglian views, but produces no firm evidence: *Kateryn Parr*, pp.213, 273-74.
[48] Katherine Parr, *Lamentation*, Harleian Miscellany 1, pp.296-97, 301.
[49] *LW* 40, pp.99-100.
[50] *LW* 42, pp.7-14.

Luther's work against Karlstadt or his meditation, so the similarity of their language and sentiment is a striking meeting of minds.[51]

There is no solid reason, therefore, to doubt that Katherine was a good Lutheran.[52] So even after Cromwell's fall and the King's Book, the Lutheran gospel got closer to Henry than ever before, even into his bed. Luther would have appreciated the irony, doubtless attributing it to the power of the Word in breaking down all barriers that the enemies of the gospel could put up against it. For all the setbacks, and despite the disadvantages compared with Scandinavia, the Lutheran flame could still flicker, albeit hidden under a lampstand until Henry was dead and times improved. Katherine and Cranmer had both survived Catholic plots against them, Latimer was free again, the balance of power in the Council had swung in the Reformers' favour, and Prince Edward's tutors included men of distinctly Reformist views.[53]

But outside the queen's court, other forces were at work. In January 1546 John Hooper, now exiled in Zurich, noted that count Palatine of the Rhineland had descended 'from the horse to the ass'. The count had, in fact, converted from Catholicism to Lutheranism. In so doing he had 'fallen from popery into the doctrine of Luther', who was 'more erroneous than all the Papists' on the Eucharist, snorted Hooper.[54] Hooper was always one of the more radical Englishmen, but even he could hardly have imagined how soon

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[51] See also D. MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London, 1999), pp.187-89: Katherine's phraseology may be similar to John Fisher's, but I suspect her heart was nearer Luther.

[52] It was after writing this section that I found that my view was broadly the same as Susan James'. Though allowing for some lingering Erasmianism, and even a dash of Calvinism, she says of Katherine that the 'mainstream of her religious thought came from Luther': *Kateryn Parr*, pp.209,213.

[53] For the plot against Cranmer, see D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven & London), 1996, pp.297-323. On Edward's Tutors and the Reformers' rising fortunes in Henry's last months, see A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (2nd edn., London, 1989), pp.216-21; MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant*, pp.7-8.

the Sacramentarian heresy would sweep Lutheranism aside and become mainstream in England.

[54] *OL* 1, pp.37-38.

Chapter 6: The Edwardian Reformation

Introduction

Following the death of Henry VIII and the triumph of the Reform party when Edward succeeded, the way lay open for the establishment of Lutheranism as the national religion in England. This was the natural, obvious and easy thing to do. It meant a religious change, but not an especially radical one. Some of the most cherished beliefs like the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, as well as most of the dearly loved images and church artwork, would be retained. Acceptance of justification by faith could be smoothed by emphasising good works and their necessity for salvation (in the Melanchthonian sense, that is).[1] Renouncing the sacrifice of the mass and making lay communion the norm would be major changes but not impossible, as events proved. Most of the rest was enviably straightforward. In Henry's

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[1] See Chapter 3, pp.152-55. Actually the Edwardians did not do this. In Cranmer's Homilies of 1547, good works were 'necessarily to be done after (justification) of duty towards God', and should be 'rendered unto God again for His great mercy and goodness' as an 'open testimonial' of true faith. However, the connection between them and salvation was absent. Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, pp.129, 133, 140. See Chapter 3, pp.153-63 for discussion on Melanchthon's *Loci*. Then not one of the Forty-Two Articles of 1553 dealt with the good works of faith. (E. Gibson, *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (2nd edn,. London, 1898), pp.70-89. Article 11 declared justification by faith alone. Works without faith were rejected in articles 9 and 12, and works of supererogation – those done without God's command – in article 13. But the good works of faith were absent. They appeared in Article 12 of the Thirty-Nine, a new article, added in 1563, but without the Melanchthonian 'necessity' to salvation. A detailed analysis and comparison of the Thirty-Nine and Forty-Two is given in Gibson, pp.30-43.) Opposition was inevitable, led by Stephen Gardiner, on how faith alone without charity was insufficient for salvation. (*Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. J.A.Muller (Cambridge, 1933), pp.299, 304-10, 331-48, 360-65, 374-75, 381-83, 402-9.) Leaving out the Melanchthonian 'necessity' does not signify a shift from Lutheran to Reformed ground, because all Protestant theologians were exercising themselves about Christian living and 'sanctification'. Whatever the doctrinal arguments, its chief advantage was that it could blunt attacks on the new gospel from traditionalists, and impress on everyone that 'love thy neighbour' was still an integral part of Christianity. It could serve as a useful tactical measure, making Protestantism seem less radical, thereby helping to usher in Reform more gently. This, I argued, is how Cromwell saw it, and framed the Ten Articles accordingly (chapter 3). It may be that the Edwardians, flushed with their victory when Edward succeeded Henry, felt that such discretion was no longer needed. Melanchthon's words were not expressly repudiated, but the revised language may hint at a more assertive, unapologetic Protestant spirit.

reign nearly all monasteries had been closed, while the Ten Articles and Cromwell's Injunctions had markedly reduced the mediatorial role of the saints, pilgrimages and the veneration of images and relics.[2] The 'detestation of the pope was now so confirmed that no one either of the old or new religion can bear to hear him mentioned', according to the Venetian ambassador in 1551.[3] Soon after Edward's accession, communion in both kinds was established, with even Cuthbert Tunstall voting for it.[4] There was opposition in the Lords to the bill abolishing compulsory clerical celibacy, but in 1549 it too passed without stirring up civil strife.[5] All in all, establishing a national Lutheran church was about as straightforward a task that any group of civil and religious leaders had faced at any time during the Reformation. If any brand of Protestantism was able to win the hearts and minds of the English people, it was Luther's, and the ground had been well prepared.

But this path was not taken, and the men in power deliberately chose a harder, more radical road. The first overt evidence of a swing from Lutheranism towards the Reformed concerned church images.

Images and Iconclasts

Luther had defended church images in his 'Invocavit Sermons' of March 1522, following unauthorised outbreaks of iconoclasm in Wittenberg. Images are not necessary, and perhaps it would be better not to have them; but for the sake of pious souls who might be offended by losing them, they should be retained.

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[2] C.H.Williams (ed), *English Historical Documents*, Vol. 5, 1485-1588 (London, 1967), pp.803-4; 806.4, 812-13.
[3] *CSP, Ven.* 5, p.346.
[4] D. MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London, 1999), p.77.
[5] A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (2nd edn., London, 1989), pp.274-75.

The Law forbidding a graven image applies only to idolatrous worship. Noah, Abraham and Jacob all built altars, while Moses, at God's command, made two cherubim for the tabernacle, and set up the bronze serpent. So images are not wrong per se, so long as they are not worshipped. If they are abused as idols, then they may be destroyed, but only in an orderly manner by the civil authorities, just as godly Hezekiah destroyed Moses' serpent. People should be weaned away from images through the Gospel. Paul preached against idols in Athens without demanding their removal, and when he sailed in a ship with the sign of Castor and Pollux, he made no fuss. The real problem with images is that those who put them in churches usually imagine they are doing a service to God and a good work, which is idolatry; but even that is no justification for mob iconoclasm. For the sake of the few who use them devoutly, they should be left alone. Besides, we cannot destroy things just because they are abused: many a man has made a fool of himself with women and wine, but it does not follow that we should kill all the women and pour away all the wine.[6]

Later, against the Heavenly Prophets in 1525, Luther again supported the orderly removal of idolatrous images, particularly those adored at shrines and pilgrimages, but only under the control of the lawful authority. The main thing was to turn hearts away from them. But crucifixes and images of saints were acceptable, and paintings of Bible scenes and stories for 'the sake of better remembrance and understanding' were encouraged. 'Would to God I could persuade the rich and mighty to permit the whole Bible to be painted on

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[6] *LW* 51, pp.81-85. Scripture texts: Genesis 8.20; 12.7; 13.4; 13.18; 33.20; Exodus 20.4; 37.7; Numbers 21.9; 2 Kings 18.4; Acts 17.16, 22; Acts 28.11.

houses, inside and outside, so all can see it', for that would be a true 'Christian work'.[7]

Luther's aim was to reform and purify the church, not to overthrow and cast down. From a personal point of view he could do without images; but he would not rob pious Hans and Greta of the comfort that an image of Christ or a much loved saint might bring, perhaps as a reassuring reminder of the nearness of the Saviour in a harsh and often cruel world. Like an indulgent parent, happy to let his children play with harmless toys, he had no zeal for spoiling innocent pleasures, provided of course that they really were innocent. The faithful would soon turn away from these leftovers of the medieval church once the gospel was planted in their hearts, just as children growing up lose interest in their favourite toys.

Not all Protestants agreed, however. The sharply differing views among them were related to two methods of numbering the Ten Commandments, each one dating back to the earliest days of the church. To explain, here is the opening of the Decalogue from Exodus 20:

V3: Thou shalt have no other gods but me.

V4: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image .....

According to one tradition, used in the pre-Reformation Roman church, verses 3 and 4 *together* made up the first commandment. (The second was V7: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain'.) Luther followed this arrangement, and his 1529 Catechisms do not even quote verse 4. Real

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[7] *LW* 40, pp.86-91, 99-100. Joshua 24.26; 1 Samuel 7.12.

idolatry meant having other gods in the heart, through unbelief, work-righteousness, false worship (papal masses), man-made traditions and laws (monasticism, pilgrimages etc.). Verse 4 was little more than an example of idolatry that Old Testament believers could recognise.[8] In Zurich, however, Swiss Reformers led by Huldrych Zwingli had already adopted the alternative tradition, which made verses 3 and 4 the first and *second* commandments respectively. So having images in churches breached the second commandment. So the controversy over church artwork had nothing to do with artistic merit, either of the artists themselves or the Reformers. The Lutherans wanted to keep images for mainly *pastoral* reasons (to avoid needlessly upsetting layfolk), while the Swiss had a *theological* motive for abolishing them.

The 'Zwinglian' numbering was introduced into England unofficially at first, by George Joye in 1530 and also William Marshall in 1535. It then acquired official status when it appeared in the Bishops' Book of 1537. How and why this happened is not clear, but Cranmer's biographer believes (surely rightly) that he was the one responsible. It was later used in the King's Book of 1543 as well.[9]

What may have persuaded Henry to accept the 'Zwinglian' method was the fact that the Reformers enlisted the fathers in support of it.[10] If Cranmer convinced Henry that the numbering system *not* used by the pope had Patristic warrant, then it is not difficult to see why Henry agreed to it, especially with Stephen Gardiner, the man most likely to oppose it, away in

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[8] Tappert, pp.342, 365-371, *BSLK*, pp.507, 560-72.
[9] Cranmer: *Misc. Writings*, pp.100-105; D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven & London, 1996), p.192; *King's Book*, ed. Lacey, pp.83-99.

France. Besides, in one sense the numbering does not matter, because we may use the 'Zwinglian' method and still have a Catholic or Lutheran attitude to images, which is what the Bishops' Book and the King's Book did. So Henry (assuming he realised the numbering *was* now different) probably saw nothing sinister in it, and he may even have been pleased with it. However, the fact that the system championed by Zwinglian Sacramentaries was used at all, must be a victory for a more radical Protestantism, albeit a tiny one, and largely inconsequential at the time.

The official 'iconoclasm' of Cromwell's regime selectively targeted the famous shrines as part of the drive against pilgrimages, relics and abuse of images.[11] Paintings, statues and stained glass windows in churches were not attacked on a large scale until Edward's reign.[12] Parish church artwork (though not, sadly, monastic art) was generally safe under Cromwell. Though the restraining influence of King Henry may account for this, it is hard to find decisive evidence that Cromwell was itching to go further but feared to do so because of Henry. The inventory of his goods after his death included painted tables of the Nativity, Christ's Passion, the 'pity of our Lady' and the salutation of our Lady.[13] This is hardly what we would expect of a secret iconoclast. It rather suggests that Cromwell was following the example of Lutheran Germany, ridding the land of anything overtly idolatrous, but content to let the more harmless images in the churches remain untouched.

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[10] Eg. *Decades of H. Bullinger*, ed. T. Harding, 4 vols. (PS, 1849-52) vols. 1-2, pp.212-14; *Early Writings of John Hooper*, ed. S. Carr (PS, 1843), pp.349-50.
[11] Regarding Becket's shrine, for example, see Chapter 2, pp.102-03.
[12] R. Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1993), p.98. For examples of how the Edwardians were more zealous than Cromwell and Henry against images, see E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven & London, 1992), pp.449-53.
[13] *LP* 15. 1029.6, p.512.

But Cromwell's time had passed. King Edward had hardly begun his reign when Nicholas Ridley, by no means one of the most radical of men, equated images with superstition and idolatry.[14] Resistance was led by Gardiner. Images were a part of the life of the ancient church, he protested, and calling every image an idol is like calling every king a tyrant. The command not to make a graven image 'forbiddeth no more images now than another text forbiddeth us to puddings', he added heatedly. He agreed that images should not be worshipped, and admitted that abuses had crept in, but such cases were exceptions. As if in desperation Gardiner even appealed to the Protestant government to consider the example of Lutheran Germany, where images still stood unbroken in most churches.[15]

His appeals fell on deaf ears. The Royal Injunctions of 1547 ordered the removal of all images which 'have been' (not 'are being', by dissident traditionalists) associated with pilgrimages, offerings and incense, for the 'avoidance of that most detestable offence of idolatry'. From now on no torches, tapers, candles or wax were to be set before any image or picture, though the two lights on the altar signifying Christ as the Light of the world could remain. Resentment was widespread. Many people tried to save their favourite images by pleading that they had never been abused, and arguments arose as to whether this or that image had ever been linked with idolatry. The Council decided to solve these difficulties by getting rid of all images, idolatrous or not, and Cranmer lost little time in directing all bishops to obey. The articles of inquiry for the visitation of Canterbury Cathedral of

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[14] *Works of N. Ridley*, ed. H. Christmas (PS, 1843), pp.83-96. On p.89 Ridley notes Augustine's commendation of Varro for refusing images – *City of God*, Book 4, Cap. 31; *PL* 41, col.138.
[15] Gardiner, *Letters*, pp.255-59, 272-76, 285-90.

September 1550, probably fairly typical of the country at large, demanded to know 'what was done with the images lately in this church, whether any doth remain not defaced and utterly extincted, and in whose custody and keeping they be'.[16]

The resulting iconoclasm was not the activity of zealots on the fringe, as in Lutheran Germany, but an official government policy ruthlessly executed. Even stained glass windows were not entirely safe. The sense of loss and hurt in much of the country may be measured from the church wardens of Stanford in the Vale, who dated the 'time of schism' of England from the 'Catholic Church' to the second year of Edward's reign, as if all that had happened under Henry was trifling by comparison.[17] Without checking the details of every record or visitation, it would be reasonably safe to assume that many images destroyed by the Edwardians would have survived a Lutheran Reformation.

Most controversially of all, however, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist was officially denied, and the non-corporal 'spiritual presence' teaching of the Swiss and the Genevans became the official doctrine in England.

The Eucharist

Luther's early rejection of the Roman mass as a propitiatory sacrifice quickly became a Protestant consensus. Luther also rejected Rome's transubstantiation, arguing that it did not fit the Scriptural language, especially

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[16] Foxe 5, pp.707, 717-18. Cranmer, *Misc Writings*, pp.499, 503, 161.
[17] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp.449-53, 532; MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant*, pp.69-72, 134-36; *CSP, Span.* 9, pp.219-20.

1 Corinthians 11 ('eat this bread', 'drink this cup', etc.)[18] This too became standard Reformation doctrine, but the consensus soon began to crumble on the question of Christ's presence in the sacrament. Luther believed in a sacramental union of the bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ, rather like a red-hot iron where the fire and iron are so mixed that every part is *both* fire and iron.[19] This may sound a little like consubstantiation, but consubstantiation is not a Lutheran dogma and never has been. Exactly how Christ is present in the elements, Luther preferred to leave undogmatised and undefined. No mortal mind, even when renewed and regenerated, is either able or expected to comprehend everything about the Deity, else God would not be God. Allowance must always be made for the impenetrable and the mysterious in divine things. 'We are not commanded to inquire as to how it may come to pass that the bread becomes and is the body of Christ. God's Word is there, that speaks. With that we remain, believing'.[20]

In the 1520s Luther was opposed, first by Karlstadt in Wittenberg, and then by leading Swiss Reformers like Zwingli and Oecolampadius, who denied Christ's bodily presence in the elements. Briefly, the main Swiss objections, with Luther's answers, were these:

1: 'This is my body' means 'this signifies' or 'represents' (Swiss). 'This is' means just what it says (Luther).

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[18] 1 Corinthians 11.26-27.
[19] *WA* 6, p.510, lines 4-8; *LW* 36, p.32. In this section of the '*Babylonian Captivity*' Luther describes how he came to reject transubstantiation and believe in this sacramental union: *WA* 6, pp.508-12; *LW* 36, pp.28-35.
[20] Uns ist nicht befohlen zu forschen, wie es zugehe, dass unser Brot Christi Leib wird und sei. Gottes Wort ist da, das sagts, da bleiben wir bei und glaubens'. *WA* 18, p.206, lines 20-23; *LW* 40, p.216.

2: John 6 – 'my words are spirit and life' – shows that the eating and drinking at communion are spiritual, not literal (Swiss). John 6 does indeed refer to spiritual eating, but that does not cancel out the Words of Institution (Luther).

3: On the basis of John 6 again – 'whosoever eateth my flesh (spiritually) hath eternal life' – the unworthy do not receive the body of Christ at communion (Swiss). The unworthy do receive, but to their judgement (the *manducatio impiorum*) according to 1 Corinthians 11.27-29 (Luther).

4: According to His human nature, Christ has ascended into heaven, so He may be *spiritually* present in the sacrament, but not *corporally* present (Swiss). Christ is omnipotent and everywhere, filling all things, even in His human nature, and He can fulfil all His promises (Luther).[21]

During the 1530s, as the previous section has shown, some mainstream English reformers including Cranmer seemed receptive, if only cautiously and faintly, to Zwinglian ideas on images, particularly in the numbering of the Ten Commandments. However, the researches of Dr. Brooks and Professor MacCulloch have shown that Cranmer's beliefs on the

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[21] For fuller discussion see Brecht 2, pp.293-334; G. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge, 1976), pp.287-342. This last point (Christ's omnipotence) came to be known as 'ubiquity', and is easy to misunderstand. According to the English radical, John Hooper, Luther tried to 'establish the corporal presence of the body of Christ in the bread' from ubiquity (*OL* 1, p.46). In fact Luther 'established' the real presence from the Words of Institution, not from ubiquity. The 'ubiquity' argument was used to answer the Swiss objection to that presence. It went like this. Christ is at the right hand of God, which is everywhere; therefore He is present in the bread and wine at table, because where the right hand of God is, there Christ's body and blood must be. So Christ's presence on the altar, or anywhere else, is due to His ubiquity. However, ubiquity does not make the real presence available *for us*. Only the Word (the Words of Institution) can do that. More specifically, ubiquity does not make the *sacrament*. Ubiquity or not, there can be no sacrament without the Word. *LW* 37, pp.47, 55-69, 155-56, 215-16, 227-35. See also Luther's *Large Catechism*, Tappert, p.448.10, *BSLK*, p.709.10.

Eucharist seemed Lutheran enough until he converted to the 'spiritual presence' around 1546 or 1547.[22]

The English were aware of the continental Eucharistic controversy, and Cranmer claimed to have seen 'almost everything' published by Zwingli and Oecolampadius.[23] However, as Dr. Brooks' study of Cranmer's 'Commonplace' writings has illustrated, Cranmer endorsed Luther's arguments against Zwingli.[24] In 1537 Cranmer told Joachim Vadian, a leading St. Gall Reformer, that the Swiss view was 'altogether displeasing' to him. When Adam Damplip, under suspicion for heresy in July 1538, maintained the real presence but denied transubstantiation, Cranmer thought that Damplip 'taught but the truth'. During this period in his life Cranmer was 'yet but a Lutheran', explained John Foxe, as if being a Lutheran was a sort of apprenticeship that had to be served before graduating as a Reformed divine.[25]

Cranmer's Conversion

Cranmer changed, and changed decisively, after discussions on the Eucharist with his close ally Nicholas Ridley, and a re-examination of the church fathers. Ridley explained that the writings of Ratramnus of Corbie, a ninth century monk, caused him to search the Scriptures and the fathers more accurately, and convinced him of the truth of the spiritual presence.[26] Cranmer embraced the Reformed faith in 'Nimirum anno 46', according to the preface to the 1557

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[22] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp.180-84, 232-4; 354-55; 379-83; 390-92; 614-16; P. N. Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist* (London, 1965), pp.3-37.
[23] Cranmer, *Misc.Writings*, pp. 344.
[24] Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist*, pp.21-33; MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p.182.
[25] Cranmer, *Misc.Writings*, pp. 343, 375-76; Foxe 5, p.501.

Latin translation of Cranmer's *Defence of the True Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament*, his major work on the Eucharist. MacCulloch notes that this probably meant the old-styled year from March 1546 to March 1547, and that there is no firm evidence for his new theology until the end of 1547.[27] It would be unlikely and out of character for Cranmer to commit himself to the spiritual presence while Henry was alive. Whatever persuasions Ridley used, whatever he had gleaned from the fathers, and whatever his own personal views, Cranmer's loyalty to Henry invariably compelled him to sink his own thoughts out of obedience to the king. He had doubted Anne Boleyn's guilt, he was devastated by the Six Articles and by Cromwell's fall, but in each case he submitted to Henry. Then in 1543, after fighting unsuccessfully for justification by faith alone in the King's Book, he showed an 'unheroic obedience' (MacCulloch's words) when Henry's decision went against him.[28] Moreover, at Cranmer's trial no one accused him of hypocrisy or disloyalty to Henry for holding heretical views during Henry's lifetime. Had there been even the slightest evidence for this, surely his Catholic opponents would have pounced on it and made as much ado of it as they could.

It would seem, therefore, that not until February or March 1547 did Cranmer begin to cross the Rubicon. Now, with Edward on the throne – a Protestant triumph – the responsibility for leading the church fell to Cranmer. Soon he was corresponding with Bucer on the Eucharist, and discussing it face to face with Peter Martyr.[29] As archbishop, Cranmer's view – his *revised* view – would be decisive in formulating the official doctrine of the English

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[26] Foxe 6, p.477; Ridley, *Works*, pp.206, 407; Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, p.218; *OL*.1, p.13, fn.
[27] Cox 1, p.6; MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p.355.
[28] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp.157-59, 251, 270, 309, 316, 343-46; J. Ridley, *Thomas Cranmer* (Oxford, 1962), pp.12, 240-41.

church. Cranmer was not a Protestant pope figure with unchallenged authority on doctrine, and some, like John Hooper, were not afraid to oppose him openly on certain points. Nevertheless, his stature and seniority ensured that his change of mind on the Eucharist was bound to be a significant influence on other Reformers. Latimer for one acknowledged his debt to Cranmer's *Defence* for helping him to convert.[30]

Opinions differ on how widespread the Lutheran view of the Eucharist was in Henry's last years. Richard Rex and Rory McEntegart reckon that English Lutherans were relatively few in number, while the Sacramentaries were a larger, more popular movement. Alec Ryrie's study suggests that the Lutheran view was more widely held.[31] It seems to me that what Ryrie's evidence shows is that Cranmer's Lutheran view enjoyed a fair measure of support until Cranmer himself moved on to Reformed ground, taking others along with him. Besides, in a deferential Tudor society, freedom of choice and liberty of conscience – in so far as they mattered at all – generally mattered less than obedience to kings, nobles, and bishops. Cranmer's conversion, therefore, was decisive for the English Reformation, as well as a personal spiritual milestone.

In September 1548 Bartholomew Traheron, a keen observer of developments here, wrote to Heinrich Bullinger announcing that Latimer 'has come over to our opinion respecting the true doctrine of the Eucharist, together with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other bishops who before

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[29] See discussion in MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp.380-83.
[30] Foxe 6, p.505.
[31] R. Rex, *Henry VIII*, p.158; R. McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden, 1531-1547: Faction, Foreign Policy and the English Reformation' (London School of Economics Ph. D., 1992), pp.293-97, 348; A. Ryrie, 'English Evangelical Reformers in the Last Years of Henry VIII' (Oxford D.Phil., 2000), pp.178-86.

this seemed to be Lutherans'. Traheron was in buoyant mood. 'I perceive it is all over for Lutheranism in England', he rejoiced, after the debate in the Lords on the Eucharist that December.[32] Actually the December debate produced no official policy statement or legislation, but our correspondent had gauged the mood of the times aright. The die was cast, and Lutheranism finished.

Like many a new convert, Cranmer championed his new faith as heartily as he disdained the one he had forsaken. His *Defence*, first published in 1550, vigorously argues the main and by now familiar Reformed points – the Words of Institution are symbolic; Christ has ascended to heaven so He cannot be on the altar; John 6 shows the 'eating' is spiritual; the unworthy do not receive the body of Christ. This time, however, Luther's answers to the Swiss, previously approved by Cranmer in his 'Commonplace' books, are completely passed over.[33]

Cranmer left no-one in any doubt about what he thought of his former days. In Book 1 of the *Defence* he listed four 'errors' of the 'Papists': transubstantiation, the real or corporal presence of Christ, the belief that unworthy communicants receive the body and blood of Christ, and the mass as a sacrifice.[34] The two middle ones of course are Lutheran 'errors' as well. In other places where the 'Papists' are trounced for their errors, Lutheran ones are mingled in among them.[35] The real presence was now Papist doctrine in Cranmer's vocabulary, and apparently it hardly mattered how it

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[32] *OL* 1, pp.322-23.
[33] For analysis of Cranmer's '*Defence*' and discussion of his mature Eucharistic theology, see Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist* pp.72-111; MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp.461-69.
[34] Cranmer, *Defence*, pp.76-80.
[35] Cranmer, *Defence*, pp.124-126, 139, 163, 193.

was defined, whether by transubstantiation, consubstantiation, Luther's sacramental union, or some other way.

On the related subject of Christology, Cranmer had become about as different from Luther as it was possible for a Protestant to be. After upholding the Reformed view that Christ's human nature is finite, he attacked the Papists (and in the sense he meant it, this would include the Lutherans as well) 'which say that the body of Christ is in an infinite number of places at one time, and do make His body to be God, and so confound the two natures of Christ, attributing to His human nature that thing which belongeth only to His divinity, which is a most heinous and detestable heresy'.[36]

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[36] Cranmer, *Defence*, pp.123-28, 133-34, 138. See also Ridley, *Works*, p.176.
Contrast Luther:- 'Since the divinity and humanity are one person in Christ, the Scriptures ascribe to the divinity, because of this personal union, all that happens to the humanity, and vice versa..... Indeed you must say that the person (pointing to Christ) suffers and dies (even though Deity cannot suffer and die). But this person is truly God, and therefore it is correct to say, the Son of God suffers. Although the one part (the divinity) does not suffer, nevertheless the person who is God suffers in the other part (the humanity). Just as we say, the king's son is wounded, when only his leg is wounded; Solomon is wise, though only his soul is wise; Absolom is handsome, though only his body is handsome; Peter is grey, though only his head is grey..... For the Son of God is truly crucified for us, that is this person who is God. For that is what He is - this person, I say, is crucified according to His humanity. Thus we should ascribe to the whole person whatever pertains to one part of the person, because both parts constitute one person'. ..... And as Christ is God and man, two natures, one Person, then 'wherever He is according to His divinity, He is there as a natural divine person, and He is also naturally and personally there'. So if we say 'here is God' it follows that 'Christ the man is present too'. *LW* 37, pp.210-11 (abridged), pp.218-19; also discussion pp.228-35.
Note also the following exchange at Cranmer's trial between himself and Dr. Chedsey. Chedsey: 'When Thomas touched the risen Christ, did he touch God?' Cranmer: 'He (Thomas) touched not God, but Him which was God; neither is it sound doctrine to affirm that God is touched.' Chedsey: 'This is because of the union; so that God is said to be touched when Christ, who is both God and man, is touched.' Foxe 6, p.455. On this, Luther would have supported Chedsey.
Thus the controversy over the Eucharist was linked with the so-called 'interchange of properties' (*communicatio idiomatum*): that the divine and human natures of Christ, 'though separate, are yet so intimately related that the attributes of the one may be expressly predicated of the other' B. Reardon, *Religious Thought and the Reformation* (2nd. edn., London, 1995), pp.76, 96.
Arising from this is the question of which came first in the Reformation controversies, the Eucharist or Christology? At first I could not envisage anyone coming to a view of the Eucharist via Christology, for the reverse seems far more likely. Not all would agree, however. See G. Locher, *Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives* (Leiden, 1981). The author argues that Zwingli's opposition to Luther arose not from his supposed rationalism but Christology (p.59). Further, that Luther and Zwingli were nearer than they seemed, and 'had their debate been about Christology from the very beginning', then the controversy over the Eucharist 'would not have gained such a fateful significance' (p.174). Historically, the subject may not be easy to

On another occasion, in 1551, Cranmer's adversary Stephen Gardiner provocatively reminded the archbishop that he used to believe in the real presence. The recollection seemed to make Cranmer shudder: he did not deny Gardiner's claim, but he thanked the merciful and eternal God who 'wiped away those Satanish scales from mine eyes'.[37] The transformation In Cranmer was complete.

With the fall of Cromwell in summer 1540, Lutheranism had received a life threatening wound. It *could* have been healed, but it was not to be. After the deaths of Cromwell and Barnes, Lutheranism no longer had a powerful patron and a trusty representative in England. Cranmer was the leading Reformer in Edward's reign, and the fortunes of the English Reformation were largely in his hands. And though Cranmer was Lutheran on justification, the papacy and much else besides, he had by now rejected the Lutheran doctrine on the Eucharist – a doctrine which he had previously confessed himself – as emphatically as any man could.

The Faith of the Protector

Protector Somerset, head of Edward's government, had been a military commander during Henry's Scottish wars of the 1540s. After Edward's accession, Scotland featured prominently in Somerset's policy. He planned to garrison Scotland, subdue the country, secure the marriage of King Edward to the Scottish Queen Mary Stuart, and establish Edward as overlord of Scotland. The Scots were aided by France: in June 1548 a ten thousand

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resolve. One the one hand, Christological differences between Luther and the Swiss did not come to light, nor were they formulated, until the Eucharistic controversy flared up. Unfortunately this does not prove the point, because in the early 1520s, when no one was challenging the Chalcedonian creed, explicit Christological statements were not necessary.

strong French force landed in the Firth of Forth, and two months later Mary Stuart was moved to France. Inevitably the Scottish policy influenced the religious policy, because the Franco-Scottish alliance meant that England could not afford to alienate Charles V.[38]

So Somerset proceeded carefully on the religious issues. He opened the Lords' debate on the Eucharist in December 1548 dealing with the question 'whether the bread be in the sacrament after consecration or not'. Later in the debate he declared that 'there is bread still', thus rejecting transubstantiation; but Somerset did not commit himself when Cranmer and Ridley both argued what was effectively the Reformed case.[39] This is hardly enough to make Somerset a Lutheran, however. The company he kept and favoured may testify more eloquently to his real beliefs. John Hooper, who called the real presence 'but a yesterday's bird', also called the Protector his 'patron'. William Turner, Somerset's physician for three years, and Thomas Becon, his chaplain, had both rejected the Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist, though perhaps less colourfully than Hooper. Two notable European immigrants provide further clues to Somerset's real views. Peter Martyr, the refugee Italian, was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford in March 1548, and the following year Martin Bucer took the same position at Cambridge. Soon after arriving in England Martyr, previously an associate of Bucer's, became almost identical to Bullinger on the Eucharist, as Martyr himself acknowledged after an impressive performance in a disputation on the mass at Oxford. Martyr admired Somerset, and the feeling was mutual.

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[37] Cox 1, pp.240-41.
[38] M. L. Bush, *The Government Policy of Protector Somerset* (London, 1975), pp.1-30.

Relations between Somerset and Bucer, however, though cordial at first, soon cooled, possibly because of differences between Bucer and Hooper, mainly over the Eucharist.[40] Hooper was markedly unenthusiastic about Bucer's presence in England.[41]

It seems, therefore, that the Protector was a committed, though diplomatic, Reformed Protestant. His government was soon acting against the old faith and its prominent adherents by imposing restrictions on the mass, preaching and printing. Soon after Edward's reign began Stephen Gardiner, the most powerful voice of opposition, was confined to the Fleet, then released, then confined at his home, then put safely in the Tower in July 1548 after preaching a sermon contrary to the government's directions. Bonner, though more compliant, was deprived of his bishopric and imprisoned by October 1549. The Council also pressured Princess Mary to conform in religion. A dispensation allowing her to hear mass in private was intended mainly as a temporary, exceptional measure. The government was mindful of the risk that Mary could become the focal point for Catholic resistance, even a rebellion. More important still was the need to appease Charles V, partly because of Somerset's Scottish war, and also, quite apart from that, some Englishmen feared that Charles, following his victory over the Schmalkaldic League at Mühlberg in 1547, might seek to avenge his aunt, Catherine of Aragon. So, in what M. L. Bush called a 'sustained policy of deceit in matters of religion', Somerset and his government tried to present England's religious

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[39] F. A. Gasquet & E. Bishop, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer* (2nd edn., London, 1890), pp.397, 404-5, 407, 418-20, 434-35, 440. See also discussions in MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp.405-07; Bush, *Protector Somerset*, p.103.
[40] *Early Writings of Bishop Hooper*, ed. S. Carr (PS, 1843), p.112; *OL* 2, pp.377-78, 388, 478; Bush, *Protector Somerset*, pp.104-12.
[41] *OL* 1, 61, 64.

changes in a deceptively moderate light during their dealings with Charles. The English also stopped supporting the German Lutheran princes, and even expressed diplomatic satisfaction at Charles' victory over them. This policy had some success. It secured not only Charles' neutrality, but even his limited support: he allowed the English to recruit mercenaries from his lands, and closed his ports to French ships used in the Scottish war. Also, the Anglo-Imperial treaty of 1543, covering various subjects including trade, was ratified in summer 1549. Protector Somerset was involved in all these measures.[42]

A Last Chance Gone

So England had a Reformed Archbishop of Canterbury and a Reformed head of government. She also had a Protestant Tudor king, still a minor, but growing up fast.[43] In the late 1540s, no one of real authority remained to raise the Lutheran standard, either in church or state. One of the political attractions of Lutheranism in the earlier stages of the Reformation was the control over the national church that it offered the king, but after Cranmer's inaugural address at Edward's coronation, even this advantage was lost. Cranmer hailed Edward as 'God's Vice-Gerent and Christ's vicar within your own dominions'.[44] Cranmer was going further than the Lutheran 'two-kingdoms' teaching, which accepted the king as ordained of God, but primarily in the civil sphere. Nor was this a new theme of Cranmer's, because he was consistently one of the most enthusiastic advocates of the Royal Supremacy. He believed

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[42] Bush, *Protector Somerset*, pp.101-02, 112-26.
[43] On Edward's royal education, see J. Loach, *Edward VI* (London & New Haven, 1999), pp. 12-15, 146-58. For Edward's Protestantism, and in particular his Reformed faith, see discussion in D. MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London, 1999), pp.23-41.
[44] Cranmer, *Misc Writings*, p.127

that 'all Christian princes have committed unto them immediately of God the whole cure of all their subjects, as well concerning the administration of God's word for the cure of souls, as concerning the ministration of things political and civil governance'. He could sound sorry for the church in the apostles' time, when ministers had to be chosen by the 'consent of the Christian multitude' because no Christian prince reigned over them to make these appointments for them. The real significance of these words is not appreciated without the date; it was late 1540, *after* Cromwell's fall, when the prospects for Reform were dashed.[45] Later, at his trial in Mary's reign, Cranmer confessed that the king possessed both the keys and the sword.[46] Jasper Ridley was probably right in saying that 'belief in the Royal Supremacy became for Cranmer as fundamental a principle as his belief in the supremacy of Scripture'.[47] If a man can have a religious conviction about the sacrament or justification, then he can have one about the spiritual authority of his Sovereign as well.

Whether Cranmer was still Lutheran at Edward's coronation, or already Reformed, or crossing the bridge from one to the other, he was offering the king more real authority in the spiritual sphere than any Lutheran prince possessed. So, ironically, it was largely due to Protestant Cranmer that a Lutheran settlement had now become theologically unattractive, and politically unnecessary.

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[45] Cranmer, *Misc Writings*, pp.115-16.
[46] Cranmer, *Misc Writings*, pp.127, 213.
[47] J. Ridley, *Thomas Cranmer* (Oxford, 1962), p.66.

Conclusion

This thesis has told the story of a proud Tudor king, driven by a personal crisis to defy the Roman see and establish himself as the head of the national church. It has portrayed King Henry not as a weak prince pulled this way and that by factions at court and in council, but as master in his own realm. On religion he made the church fathers his doctrinal authorities, but because he did not always fully understand the doctrines, the result was some rather peculiar religious legislation. The thesis then sought to unravel the Ten Articles and the Six Articles. It went on to argue that Henry's Lutheran policy was based largely on a theological misunderstanding – a critical point, because this was a king ruling actively in the spiritual as well as the secular sphere. It investigated what might have led to this misunderstanding, and suggested as a reason the seemingly but not fundamentally 'new' Lutheranism of Philip Melanchthon, aided perhaps by the astuteness of Thomas Cromwell in framing the Ten Articles. As a result, Cromwell's fall was re-examined in a new light. A brief survey of the Scandinavian experience showed the tried and proven way of getting Lutheranism established nationally, and showed also how different things were in England. Finally in Edward's reign, when key figures like Thomas Cranmer preferred the Reformed view of the Eucharist, the chances of a Lutheran settlement vanished.

King Henry's conflict with the papacy left England facing political isolation in Europe, and religious uncertainty at home. It chanced, however, that the Lutherans had now prepared their own Augsburg Confession, and

had presented it to their Emperor. Though heretical in Rome's eyes and rejected by Charles V, it nonetheless enjoyed a sort of respectability, if only because theologians and learned people all over Europe were talking about it. Henry had found some common ground with the Germans, particularly regarding the papacy, and he had the opportunity to accept in full the Lutheran creed; but rather than join them he chose to negotiate with them.

From his early days, notably when defending the seven sacraments against Luther, Henry had a high regard, even a reverence, for the church fathers. During the divorce crisis he looked back almost romantically to a golden age when national churches, built on the teachings of Scripture, the fathers and the councils, were blessed with kings, not popes reigning over them as God's anointed. But Henry was also attracted, if not entirely persuaded, by what he thought was a new Lutheranism in the 1530s, formulated by Philip Melanchthon. As a result, English Reformers were no longer reined in as before, and provided they were discreet, the new gospel could be preached comparatively freely. Henry then started debating with the Lutherans on communion, the private mass and clerical celibacy, hoping for a religious and political settlement. He did so on the assumption that agreement had already been reached on the most important doctrinal point of all – justification. Unfortunately, this was a royal misconception. When the scales fell from his eyes in Lent 1540, his enthusiasm for the Lutheran policy vanished, and its chief advocates, especially Cromwell, were suddenly in great danger. Henry's disappointment with Anne of Cleves, and his infatuation with Catherine Howard, sealed Cromwell's fate.

Meanwhile the story of Denmark and Sweden might suggest that Lutheranism would never be right for England because the necessary preconditions were missing. There was no train of Wittenberg educated ministers returning to England, brimming with enthusiasm and dedication for the Augsburg Confession, nor a king committed to the cause like Christian III, nor the assuring presence in England of Wittenberg overseers like Bugenhagen in Denmark. Moreover, a more radical Protestantism was advancing through Europe, and winning converts in England.

Henry's last years (1540-47) were uncertain but not intolerable times for English Reformers, and the Lutheran cause was not over yet. Thomas Cranmer still enjoyed the king's favour, while Henry grew old blissfully unaware that *sola fides* had found its way into his arms in the form of his last wife, Queen Katherine Parr. Then Henry's death and Edward's accession gave the Reformers the chance to transform the English Church, which they seized zealously. The Edwardian settlement owed much to Luther, but parts of his gospel seemed like unwelcome hangovers from the despised papist system. The Reformation had divided over religious images and the Eucharist, and the Swiss/Genevan position was altogether more satisfying to the new rulers of Edwardian England, though maybe not to the country as a whole.

And so the Edwardian Church was born, though not the part Catholic and part Reformed alliance of Anglo-Catholic imagination. There is nothing even partly Catholic in the Thirty-Nine Articles on justification and the sacraments, or in making the sovereign rather than the pope the head of the church. Its doctrine was unabashedly Protestant, and this was Luther's

legacy. Even though his Eucharistic teaching did not prevail, the Reformers' fundamental tenet – justification by faith alone – was his discovery. If dogmas could be patented, he could claim copyright on this one.

'Victor est Lutherus', he had averred prophetically in his first battle with Henry over the Seven Sacraments.[1] But had he lived to see his victory over his old foe it would have brought him only grief, for no sooner had *sola fides* triumphed in England, than Swiss and Genevan eagles swooped to carry off the spoils.

However, in the Royal Supremacy – something neither Catholic nor Protestant – Henry left a legacy of his own. It is due to Thomas Cranmer that Luther and Henry, those two adversaries in life, were united (after a fashion) in death. As the chief architect of the Edwardian Reformation, and the ardent champion of both Luther's *sola fides* and Henry's Royal Supremacy, Cranmer was the one who cemented the two together. At the same time, ironically, he rejected Luther on the Eucharist as well as Henry's 'Patristic' Catholicism, and brought the English church in line with Zurich and Geneva.

The Edwardian church was decisively Reformed, but it had an ecumenical spirit as well. Cranmer was anxious for Protestant unity, and letters went out to Melanchthon, Calvin and Bullinger among others, with a view to arranging a conference in England to resolve outstanding differences, and bequeath to coming generations a 'true and explicit form of doctrine agreeable to the rule of sacred writings'. Cranmer was especially desirous of seeing Melanchthon, and hoped, with the help of John à Lasco, the Polish Reformer, to 'make our friend Philip ours in reality'.[2] Melanchthon's belief on

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[1] Luther's reply to Henry's '*Assertion*': *WA* 10 (2) p.221, line 32.
[2] Cranmer, *Misc. Writings*, pp.420-34 (quotes from p.422).

the Eucharistic, the issue central to Protestant unity, was described by C. L. Manschreck as the 'real, spiritual presence' as distinct from the corporal, near-Catholic presence held by Luther, which had become so objectionable to Edwardian English Reformers. J. W. Richard felt that with Melanchthon 'the religious significance of the Supper is more important than the metaphysics of dogma'. However, Melanchthon did not accept the Reformed teaching that Christ's ascension into heaven confines Him there until the Second Coming, and this was probably one of the differences that Crammer wanted to discuss and settle.[3]

Melanchthon wrote to King Edward in January 1548, wishing him well, and praying with 'all my heart' that God will rule the young king's mind, so that God's glory may be magnified and souls converted to Him. Philip wrote to Cranmer in March the same year, sorrowing over the church, buffeted as she is with divisions and strife, with a 'greater flood of tears than the waters of our Elbe or your Thames'.[4] Unfortunately, Cranmer's proposed conference never happened, but in May 1553 Edward's Council invited Melanchthon to become Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, a post previously held by Martin Bucer from 1549 until his death in 1551. This time Melanchthon might have accepted, but Edward's untimely death prevented him, and dashed hopes of Protestant progress.[5]

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[3] C. L. Manschreck, *Melanchthon, The Quiet Reformer* (Westport Connecticut, 1975), pp.229-248 (quote from p.241); J. W. Richard, *Philip Melanchthon: The Protestant Preceptor of Germany, 1497-1560* (reprint New York, 1974), pp.179-81, 242-49 (quote from p.244). Also on Melanchthon and the Eucharist see C. L. Manschreck (ed.), *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes, 1555* (New York, Oxford UP, 1965), pp.xiv-xvii; 202-05; 217-22; R. Stupperich, *Melanchthon* (trans. R. H. Fischer, London, 1966), pp.96, 105-6, 120-21; E. Cameron, 'Philip Melanchthon: Image and Substance', *JEH* 48 (1997), pp. 712, 719-20.
[4] *MBW* 5, nos. 5027, 5103 = *CR* 6, cols.781, 801 resp.
[5] W. K. Jordan (ed.), *The Chronicle and Political Papers of King Edward VI* (London, 1966), pp.53-54; D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven & London, 1996), pp.539-40;

When Queen Mary returned England to the Catholic fold, Edward's Protestant settlement was repealed and the Royal Supremacy renounced. Under Elizabeth both were restored, though the Supremacy in a somewhat diluted form. A certain tension existed between Elizabeth and her bishops, who gently but firmly maintained that they, not their illustrious sovereign, should decide ecclesiastic details. English monarchs thereafter governed the church through the clergy, usually by appointing a favourite prelate to a key position and letting him carry out the policy that the monarch approved of. Although King Henry's successors took the title 'Defender of the Faith', they no longer determined articles of dogma independently, or over the heads of, their bishops.[6] So Henry's legacy lacked the enduring power of Luther's.

It is tempting to look for morals and lessons when reviewing history, and ruminate over what Luther, Henry or Cranmer should have done but didn't, or should not have done but did. But pontificating from the classroom is rather like rewriting history, reshaping it according to our own prejudices and fancies, replacing the real-life characters with fictional ones of our own devising (like Hollywood, for example). It also misses the irony at the heart of the Reformation, and running all the way through it. To begin with, just as St. Paul was formerly a pillar of Jewish orthodoxy, so the chief Reformer was once an excruciatingly pious and earnest monk. Without the medieval mass, monasticism, the cult of the saints and the rest, there would have been no Luther. But nowhere was the irony greater than in England. The real reason that Lutheranism finally failed here was not that King Henry rejected it, but

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D. MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London, 1999), p.170.

[6] P. Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625* (Oxford, 1982), pp.1-38.

that devout Protestants like Thomas Cranmer – men and women prepared to die at the stake for their faith – found it spiritually uncongenial as well, though for entirely different reasons.

No fertile mind could either invent the story of the English Reformation or improve upon it, which is why the fascination of history lies in exploring it, not in passing judgement.

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